



## Jenkins: Primary vote likely will predict next governor

Column by Don Jenkins  
The Daily News

The 2004 governor's race was so close that Democrat Chris Gregoire wasn't declared the winner until eight weeks after Election Day. In her rematch with Republican Dino Rossi, the outcome may be evident 11 weeks before Election Day.

Washington's first-ever summer primary ends Aug. 19, and we'll find out where Gregoire and Rossi stand against each other.

Four years ago, they didn't have a preliminary bout because voters had to choose either a Democratic or Republican ballot.

Since then, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Washington can resume lumping all candidates for office, regardless of party, on one primary ballot, a practice the court had previously ruled unconstitutional.

The top-two vote-getters will advance to the general election, even if they are from the same party. That wrinkle, which the court based its reversal on, won't happen in the governor's race.

Although 10 candidates filed, only Gregoire and Rossi are well-known. They will be the top-two vote-getters. And historically the winner of the primary usually wins the general election.

That leaves Rossi in the position of trying, in a hurry, to overcome the current weakness of the GOP brand and make a good showing.

Republicans have been losing even in red states, and U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, a Virginia Republican, sourly observed recently, "If we were a dog food, they would take us off the shelf."

So if Gregoire loses the primary to Rossi, that would indicate she has a real problem.

If she wins, Rossi supporters will downplay the defeat by noting that in 1972 and 1980 a Democrat received more votes in the primary, but a Republican was elected governor in the fall.

Those years, however, presented nothing like the head-to-head matchup we'll see in August between Gregoire and Rossi.

In '72 and '80, the primary fields were crowded and competitive. And most of the attention was focused on Democratic candidates.

In 1972, former governor Albert Rossellini won the Democratic nomination by beating a state senator, Martin Durkan, and a state House member, Jim McDermott (now a congressman).

Incumbent Republican Gov. Dan Evans won his party's nomination but finished second overall to Rossellini. Evans might have collected more votes than Rossellini, but longtime legislator Perry Woodall, a Republican from Toppenish, took a significant number of conservative votes.

In the fall, Rossellini led in the polls until the Seattle Post-Intelligencer insinuated Rossellini had links to organized crime, according to [HistoryLink.org](http://HistoryLink.org). Nothing was ever proven against Rossellini, but Evans won with 50.78 percent of the vote.

In 1980, conservative Democratic Gov. Dixy Lee Ray faced an intraparty challenge from the liberal McDermott. The prospect of an incumbent governor losing in the primary overshadowed a crowded Republican field.

McDermott did topple Ray, and both received more votes than John Spellman, who edged Duane Berentson for the Republican nomination.

In the fall, though, Spellman easily beat McDermott, who had triumphed in the Democratic primary but struggled in a year that voters swung to the right. Washington voters gave the state's electoral votes to Ronald Reagan and also retired Democrat Warren Magnuson from the U.S. Senate.

Rossi can't count on riding John McCain's coattails. Political analysts categorize Washington as a Democratic-leaning state in the presidential election.

Still, there are reasons the primary won't foreshadow the fall vote.

The turnout for the state's first-ever August primary could be too low to get a fix on where the candidates stand. Or, unforeseen events could bring down a candidate.

Also, Gregoire could show well in the primary and stumble in the fall with an overly cautious campaign that gives voters too little reason to vote for her. She ran a circumspect campaign in 2004 and paid for it by having to sweat out the election through Christmas.

*Originally published July 13, 2008.*

Other recent columns by Don Jenkins:

**'Blue-collar politics taking an insulting turn' (May 26)**

**'Plenty of upside to Democrats' current bitter battle' (May 4)**

**'Gameshow approach would give all voters an equal say on president' (June 24)**



Home Local Sports Classifieds Records Opinions Voices Multimedia Blogs Forums Obituaries Local RSS

Today is Tuesday,  
July 15, 2008

# Issues Solidify in District 20 Senate Race

*Swecker's Challengers: Rochester Incumbent Has Drawn Three Competitors for Long-Held Seat*

Posted July 15, 10:31 am. E-mail this article to a friend.

By Dan Schreiber  
The Chronicle

The three Republican candidates for District 20 state Senate spoke Monday night to a crowd of voters at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis.

The usual issues were up for grabs -- transportation, state spending and same-sex marriage.

Incumbent Sen. Dan Swecker played up his 14 years of experience at the Legislature, while Centralia City Councilman Ted Shannon said his local involvement and lifelong residency make him more suited for the job. Neal Kirby, the principal of Edison Elementary School in Centralia, said he's been working for issues important to rural counties since he came from Eastern Washington and served as an appointed Democratic legislator in the 1990s. Democratic candidate Chuck Bojarski was not invited to the GOP-sponsored forum.

Two of the four candidates will find themselves in the general election regardless of their party affiliation, thanks to the state's new top-two primary on Aug. 19.

The race has become a sort of referendum on Swecker's record, with opponents attacking him on his initially proposed solutions to the December 2007 flood, his support of a 2005 state gas tax and the way he works with the Democratic majority in Olympia.

Swecker serves as the ranking minority member of the Senate Transportation Committee, and said his experience is invaluable when it comes to getting projects done in the county, especially on Interstate 5.

He said bipartisan cooperation is key to getting the district what it needs.

"My number one strength is being able to work with all kinds of people," Swecker said. "Conservatives think principles are important, things like the Constitution and the Bible. Liberals just want to solve problems. In fact, what they do, is they violate principles we hold dear to solve those problems. I can take my conservative principals into the marketplace of ideas and come up with solutions that honor my principles."

Shannon said his ability to learn and adapt to a new situation would make him successful at the Legislature.

"I have the ability to work with, and find allies to work together as a team to get things done," Shannon said. "I don't have the delusion that I'm going to walk in there and make new laws that save us from the Democrats. But I will work hard."

Kirby said although he donated money to Democratic causes as recently as 2006, he considers himself an independent, and sided with Republicans to vote against the state's 1990 Growth Management Act, which required standards for development in rural areas.

Like Shannon, Kirby recommended a coalition of representatives from rural districts propose legislation to relax GMA regulations



###

## Meet the Candidates

A series of forums will be held throughout Lewis County as we approach the August primary:

Today at noon in Morton at the Morton Senior Center

Thursday at noon in Packwood at the Packwood Senior Center

Monday, July 21, in Winlock at noon at the Winlock Senior Center

Tuesday, July 22, in Chehalis at noon at St. John's Lutheran Church

Wednesday, July 30, in Toledo at noon at the Toledo Senior Center

###

and reduce the power of the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board, which recently upheld an invalidity order on rezoning the county's agricultural land.

"(The board) is passing judgement on whether the decisions we've made locally are good decisions," Kirby said. "At the time I thought that way too much local control was going to be given to the state and this board has gone way beyond what I thought."

When asked about issues of abortion, same-sex marriage and domestic partnership agreements, Swecker said he was a proud opponent of all three.

"For some reason, my caucus has made me the number one spokesman against gay marriage and domestic partnerships," Swecker said. "They depend on me to do the tough businesses of battling gay marriage and domestic partnerships. If I can't do that, I don't want to be there."

Shannon said the issue is purely economic for him, because although he doesn't want same-sex couples to receive the same benefits of traditional marriage, basic rights should not be limited.

"I do think government should stay out of the bedroom and stay out of what people do in their own time," Shannon said. "I'm not a homophobe, but marriage is what marriage is -- an institution to raise a family. That doesn't mean folks shouldn't have equal rights for other things. I don't think we should be tough on that."

Kirby was less enthusiastic about taking a stand on the two-part question, but said he's leery of state programs that fund abortions. He spoke more about tax breaks for rural school districts, an issue he has focused on since the beginning of his campaign.

He claims his earlier lobbying efforts saved \$3 million in taxes for Lewis County schools and \$5 million in Thurston County.

...

*Dan Schreiber covers county government and environmental issues for The Chronicle. He may be reached at 807-8239 or [dschreiber@chronline.com](mailto:dschreiber@chronline.com).*

Add a comment to this article:

Your Name:

Please remember the name you use.

E-mail (Optional):

Add My Comment

☐ Remember Me | Forget Me

[Home](#) [e-Edition](#) [Archives](#) [Contact Us](#) [Commercial Printing](#) [Purchase Photos](#)

(360) 736-3311 321 N. Pearl, Centralia, Washington 98531. Copyright © 1996 - 2008 Lafromboise Communications Incorporated



Sponsored Links

### **10 Rules of Flat Stomach**

Drop 9 lbs of Stomach Fat every 11 Days by  
Obeying these 10 Rules.  
10flatbellyrules.fatloss4idiots.com

### **Download Codec Pack here**

Download the free Codec Pack here Includes  
Xvid, Divx, AC3, many more  
download2easy.com

### **Free Windows Video Player**

VLC plays all popular video files. Download free  
full version.  
uberdownloads.com

### **Download Video Converter**

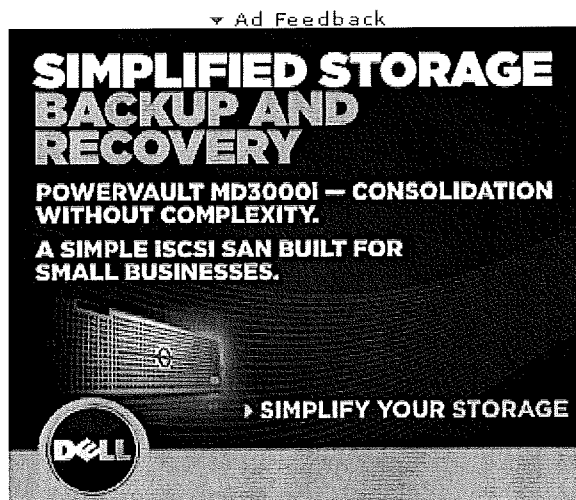
AVI MPEG DVD WMV 3GP ASF FLV SWF RM Fast  
And Easy Video Converter  
www.avs4you.com

### **Fix and Speed up your PC**

Download & scan for a faster PC. 100% Secure.  
Free Download.  
www.fasterbetterpc.com

### **Sound & Audio Systems**

Affordable, Easy Home Automation. Free 6  
Day/Wk Tech & Cust Support.  
www.smarthome.com  
(about)



## **A short cut to voters' choice; Party affiliation remains critical.(OPED)**

**Washington Times, The, October, 2006**

- [E-mail](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Link](#)



Content provided  
in partnership with

**\$ PREMIUM**

Byline: Gary Andres, THE WASHINGTON TIMES Mystery is one of the great attractions of elections. Despite the pronouncements of pollsters, pundits and piles of projections, no one really knows which party will win a majority of seats in the House and Senate in November's elections. The recent scandal caused by former Rep.

## More Articles of Interest

## Green concerns found to traverse party divide.(NATION)

The U.S. Supreme Court in March upheld Washington state's top-two primary...

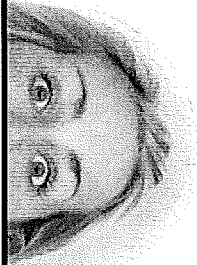
## Clinton paved the way to the White House for women

Maryland Democratic Party

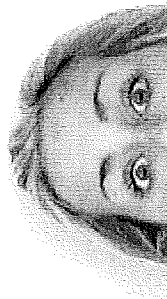
TriZetto Group set to go private with some funding from Blues.(Late...

▼ [Ad Feedback](#)

**classmates.com®**



**See a  
gazillion\*  
photos.  
Free.**



\* Or, just ones of people you know.

**Look for Photos ▶**

Mark Foley only provides more accelerant to the bonfire of uncertainty. And the stakes surrounding our collective judgment couldn't be higher. Next month's results promise profound implications for American politics and public policy. If Democrats win a majority ...

[Read the rest of this article with a Free Trial at HighBeam Research.](#)

Sponsored Links

## On-Demand Lecture Webcast

Deliver Classroom Webcasts Quickly and Easily with Mediasite.

[sonicfoundry.com](#)

## Media player windows xp

Fix: Media Player Windows Xp Complete Scan. 100% Guaranteed!

[errorsmart.com](#)

## Get the RealPlayer Free

Real's best player, video and entertainment channels in 1 package

[real.com](#)

## Digital Sign Player

Keep your message Fresh, Effective, Dynamic and Up-to-Date with ChyTV.

[digitalsignage.chytv.com](#)

(about)

Find Featured Titles for: Sports

[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

Most Popular Publications in News

[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

Most Popular Articles in News

[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

Find Research Guides for:

[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

[BNET](#)

[Site Help & Feedback](#)

[About CNET Networks](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Partnerships](#)

[Site Map](#)

[RSS Site Map](#)

Visit other CNET Networks sites: [Select Site](#)

[Go](#)

Copyright © 2008 CNET Networks, Inc. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)



Published July 07, 2008

## Can the D hold on in race for Swecker's seat?

Sen. Dan Swecker's had a rough go of it this year, what with infighting over the Chehalis River flood plan, unexpected heart surgery, and now three opponents in the primary election.

Swecker still must be the favorite in the race (going on judgment there, haven't seen or heard of polls). But the key question may be how strong the Democrat, Chuck Bojarski, is. Strong enough to hold back two Republicans and make it to November? From the full story:

(Bojarski) didn't campaign much in 2004, and his opponents say he's not campaigning this year, either.

"I missed a few deals like parades, kissing a few babies," Bojarski said. "I've been doing more grassroots. Talking to people ... instead of being at the plum pudding pie-eating contest."

Bojarski, a retired state trooper living south of Olympia, said he was hampered by the death of a son last time. He said he doesn't expect to raise much money this time, but he'll be more competitive.

"I'm not polished; I'm Polish," he joked.

Swecker's prediction of victory goes like this: Bojarski holds the 35 percent of the vote he won last time (in 2004), Swecker wins at least that much, and Kirby and Shannon split the rest. That leaves Swecker facing Bojarski in November.

(Republican challenger Ted) Shannon discounted any notion that the Democrat has a pass to November.

"Mr. Bjoarksi is not campaigning that I've seen. He only put his name on the ballot just so there is a D there," Shannon said. "So (voters) need to do some research about the candidates and what they stand for. And the top-two primary opens the possibility that the two choices will be Republicans in November."



Published July 06, 2008

## 4 candidates vie for District 20

Adam Wilson

What might have been an easy jog to re-election for state Sen. Dan Swecker is turning into a free-for-all in a district where the politics can be as volatile as the floodwaters that ravaged it last winter.

Last time he ran for election, in 2004, Swecker beat out Democrat Chuck Bojarski by 30 percentage points. So another challenge by Bojarski this year didn't seem too threatening to the Rochester Republican.

"In the past, you usually have one Democrat oppose me, and he's a known entity from Day One," Swecker said. "Quite honestly, I didn't take it too seriously, because it's a Republican district and I usually win with about 65 percent."

But the complications have piled up: Two more Republicans entered the race.

Swecker became a target for some in the Chehalis River basin upset by flood-control policies in the aftermath of devastating storm in December.

He was waylaid by unexpected heart surgery after a hip replacement in May.

And the U.S. Supreme Court approved Washington's new primary election system, which allows the top two vote-getters to move forward to November's election, regardless of party.

Together, the elements make for tough contest in District 20, which includes all of Lewis County and southern Thurston County. The primary is Aug. 19.

Neal Kirby of Centralia, a property-tax activist, entered the race early as a Republican.

But Kirby served one session as a Democrat in the Legislature and has donated to Democrats as recently as 2006, something Swecker is quick to point out.

Kirby said that as an appointed lawmaker in 1990, he was protective of business interests and low taxes.

"I think the label, whether Democratic or Republican, is important to people who are very involved in their party. I hope other people will look at our records," he said.

Not everyone is willing to give Kirby a chance. When Swecker went in for surgery, Centralia City Councilman Ted Shannon announced his candidacy to make sure a "viable Republican candidate" was in the race, he said.

When Swecker made it out of surgery in good condition, Shannon decided to stay in. He says he's less socially conservative than Swecker and less friendly with Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire.

"I believe a person should not be in a position for too long a time. Sen. Swecker has been there 14 years, and you become part of the system," Shannon said.

Swecker has opposed gay-rights measures, citing religious objections. He teamed with Gregoire to pass a major road-construction package in 2005 and supported her version of a flood-control plan this winter.

In years past, Swecker would have faced only the Republicans in the primary, and the two challengers might have split the vote against him.

But there might be cracks in his support base. His endorsement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plans to prevent floods near Interstate 5 -- a subject of debate for at least 10 years in Lewis County -- has angered some.

And the new top two-primary system means either Shannon or Kirby could run against Swecker in November, if one can come in No. 2 in the race.

Doing so would mean edging out another Republican and the Democrat, Bojarski. He didn't campaign much in 2004, and his opponents say he's not campaigning this year, either.

"I missed a few deals like parades, kissing a few babies," Bojarski said. "I've been doing more grassroots. Talking to people ... instead of being at the plum pudding pie-eating contest."

Bojarski, a retired state trooper living south of Olympia, said he was hampered by the death of a son last time. He said he doesn't expect to raise much money this time, but he'll be more competitive.

"I'm not polished; I'm Polish," he joked.

Swecker's prediction of victory goes like this: Bojarski holds the 35 percent of the vote he won last time, Swecker wins at least that much, and Kirby and Shannon split the rest. That leaves Swecker facing Bojarski in November.

Shannon discounted any notion that the Democrat has a pass to November.

"Mr. Bojarski is not campaigning that I've seen. He only put his name on the ballot just so there is a D there," Shannon said. "So (voters) need to do some research about the candidates and what they stand for. And the top-two primary opens the possibility that the two choices will be Republicans in November."

But a two-Republican race in the general election raises other problems, Kirby said.

"Incumbents usually win ... so generating campaign funds for a second race against Sen. Swecker would be pretty tough," he said. "If I were running against Bojarski, the political action committees would look and say, 'Huh, he's the only one in the race.'"

And Swecker, now in physical therapy, said he's campaigning seriously.

"I do have to run a credible race now," he said.

Adam Wilson covers state workers and politics for The Olympian. He can be reached at 360-753-1688 or [awilson@theolympian.com](mailto:awilson@theolympian.com).





# The Whidbey Examiner

News from the Heart of Whidbey Island

Friday, July 04, 2008

## Top-two primary shakes up commish race

**By Justin Burnett**  
Examiner Staff Writer

Friday, July 04, 2008

Depending on whom you ask, Washington's new top-two primary system may or may not influence the results of Island County's November general elections.

The opinions of party leaders, electoral candidates and political junkies vary as widely as their politics. But all agree on one thing: At the very least, the new system will make for an interesting election, especially in the race for the Dist. 1 Island County commissioner seat.

"It does toss some things up in the air," said Helen Price Johnson, a candidate for the seat.

The new system may do a lot more than just shake things up, Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed said.

"This could really change the outcome," Reed said.

Running for the Dist. 1 commissioner position are incumbent appointee Phil Bakke, a Republican; Reece Rose, also a Republican; Helen Price Johnson, a Democrat; and independent candidate Curt Gordon.

Under previous primary systems, one Democrat and one Republican went on to the general election no matter how many votes they earned. But the new system provides no such guarantee.

Should Gordon progress to the November ballot, voters from one of the two parties will not be able to vote a straight ticket, as many prefer to do. Rather than voting for the party, people will have to vote for the candidate. And that's just what the system is designed to do, Reed said.

"That's the point," Reed said. "Now you're looking at the candidate, and not the party."

The state Legislature adopted the new top-two primary system in 2004. It replaced the pick-a-party primary system, which was instituted after Washington's longtime blanket primary system was struck down by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 2003, three years after the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated a similar system in California, finding that it infringed on the rights of parties to pick their nominees.

The top two primary, which voters approved in 2004 with 60 percent of the vote, raises the possibility that two candidates of the same party could advance to the general election.

Although the August primary is more than a month away, in many areas of the state it's beginning to look as though two candidates of the same political party will appear on the November ballot, Reed said. Yet in others areas, the traditional mix of one Republican and one Democrat seems likely.

According to former longtime Island County Commissioner Mike Shelton, that's probably what will play out in the race for Dist. 1 commissioner, the seat he vacated in 2007.

"The Dist. 1 race is interesting," Shelton said. "But I don't think it will make a difference on who moves forward to the general



election."

Despite the new system, Shelton said, he believes voters still need or want to have at least one Democrat and one Republican on the ballot, and that desire will be reflected in the results of the August primary.

The new system has given rise to new challenges for established political parties in Island County.

Unlike in the general election, in which all registered county voters cast ballots for both of the commissioner seats that are up for election, only the approximately 18,486 registered voters who live in District 1 can vote for Dist. 1 candidates in the primary.

In other words, those votes will be divided among two competing Republicans, one Democrat and one independent. Many estimate the district is divided equally between Republicans and Democrats. And it's unknown how many voters might ditch their party affiliation and vote independent.

"The wild card is thrown in with Curt," Shelton said. "I suspect he will pull votes from both directions."

Gordon's 20 years of public service with the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District has earned him solid name recognition in South Whidbey. However, with the Republican vote already divided, Gordon's pull could further dilute their votes and reduce the chance of a Republican progressing to the November ballot.

According to Gordon, voters are aware of the possible implications. Already voters have stopped him on the street and accused him of stealing votes from Bakke and Price Johnson, Gordon said. But he also said he's heard from others who indicate they would cross party lines to vote for him.

"If he pulls a substantial vote, he really could have an impact," Reed said.

While Shelton speculated that Price Johnson, as the sole Democrat, would progress to the general election, he said Bakke's advantage as an incumbent and his previous history as the county's former planning director improve his chances of moving on to the November ballot.

"Phil is a known commodity," Shelton said.

Bakke said he thinks the new system won't have any impact on the Dist. 1 race. He agreed Gordon could pull votes in one direction or another, but he said there is no guarantee he would take them from the Republican side.

"I think there is equal opportunity that it will affect the Democrats," Bakke said. "I guess we'll find out. That's part of the fun."

Price Johnson also declined to say whether the new primary system provided her with any distinct advantage. Both she and Bakke said they believe Dist. 1 voters will support whoever they think is the best person for the job.

Republican commissioner candidate Reece Rose said she believes voters follow their conscience but said the top-two primary system may help her in her race. Unlike her loss to Shelton in 2004 in the primary for Dist. 1 commissioner, she won't be the lone candidate seeking to unseat someone from the same party.

"I think that's why I lost in 2004," Rose said.

Reece said she believes her support across party lines will help her advance to the general election.

Island County Democratic Party Chair Marshall Goldberg agreed the Dist. 1 race would likely be the election most affected by the switch to the top-two primary system. While he offered no predictions of his own, he did say each candidate would have to campaign that much harder to survive the primary.

"I think it's going to be interesting," Goldberg said.

## Related Links



**CR-103 (June 2004)**  
**(Implements RCW 34.05.360)**

☐ Permanent Rule  
☒ Emergency Rule

☐ Later (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes      ☐ No      If Yes, explain:

Repealed:  
Amended:  
Suspended:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

On March 18, 2008, the United States Supreme Court issued *Washington State Grange v. Washington State Republican Party, et al.* 552 U.S. \_\_\_, 128 S. Ct. 1184, 170 L. Ed. 2d 151 (2008). In this opinion, the Court reversed a Ninth Circuit opinion that had declared Washington's Top Two Primary system unconstitutional. The impact of this ruling is that the primary system enacted by Initiative 872 (Chapter 2, Laws of 2005) is now in effect. This change in primary election systems necessitates changes in the administrative rules relating to the format of ballots, and administration of political party precinct committee officer elections. The regular candidate filing period ends June 6, 2008. Ballots will be formatted and sent to print in June. There is insufficient time to adopt these rules through the standard rulemaking process.

WSR 08-12-013

(COMPLETE REVERSE SIDE)

**Note: If any category is left blank, it will be calculated as zero.  
No descriptive text.**

Count by whole WAC sections only, from the WAC number through the history note.  
A section may be counted in more than one category.

The number of sections adopted in order to comply with:

Federal statute:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
Federal rules or standards:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
Recently enacted state statutes:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____

The number of sections adopted at the request of a nongovernmental entity:

New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
-----	-------	---------	-------	----------	-------

The number of sections adopted in the agency's own initiative:

New	<u>3</u>	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
-----	----------	---------	-------	----------	-------

The number of sections adopted in order to clarify, streamline, or reform agency procedures:

New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
-----	-------	---------	-------	----------	-------

The number of sections adopted using:

Negotiated rule making:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
Pilot rule making:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____
Other alternative rule making:	New	_____	Amended	_____	Repealed	_____

NEW SECTION

**WAC 434-230-036 Office format for partisan offices.** The description "partisan office" must be printed either for each partisan office or as a heading above a group of partisan offices.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 434-230-100 Political party precinct committee officer.**

(1) In even-numbered years, the election for the position of political party precinct committee officer must be held on the third Tuesday of August.

(2) Unlike candidates for public partisan office, candidates for precinct committee officer file and appear on the ballot as members of a major political party. The election of precinct committee officer is an intraparty election. Candidates compete against other candidates from the same political party. The candidate of each political party who receives the most votes is declared elected. Precinct committee officers are not elected according to the top two primary system established by chapter 2, Laws of 2005 (Initiative 872).

(3) Unlike candidates for public office, the order in which candidates for precinct committee officer appear on the ballot is based on each candidate's political party. The political party that received the highest number of votes from the electors of this state for the office of president at the last presidential election must appear first, with the other political parties following according to the number of votes cast for their nominees for president at the last presidential election. Within each party, candidates shall be listed in the order determined by lot.

(4) If no candidate files for political party precinct committee officer, the position appears on the ballot with a write-in line. There is no special filing period, the political party does not appoint a candidate, and the election does not lapse. If no candidate is elected, the party may fill the position by appointment, pursuant to RCW 29A.28.071.

(5)(a) The position of political party precinct committee officer must appear following all measures and public offices.

(b) The heading must state, "election of political party precinct committee officer."

(c) The following explanation must be provided before the list of candidates: "Precinct committee officer is a position in each major political party. For this office only: If you consider yourself a democrat or republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party."

(d)(i) If all candidates are listed under one heading, the applicable major political party affiliation of either "democratic party candidate" or "republican party candidate" must be printed under each candidate's name. The first letter of each word must be capitalized, as shown in the following example:

John Smith

Democratic Party Candidate

The race must explain, "for a write-in candidate, include

party."

(ii) If candidates are listed under a major political party heading, the applicable heading of either "democratic party candidates" or "republican party candidates" must be printed above each group of candidates. The first letter of each word must be capitalized. A write-in line must be provided for each political party heading.

(6) A voter may vote for only one candidate for precinct committee officer. If a voter votes for more than one candidate, the votes must be treated as overvotes. For the limited purpose of voting in a precinct committee officer election, a voter affiliates with a major political party when he or she votes for a candidate of that party.

NEW SECTION

**WAC 434-262-075 Election of political party precinct committee officers.** (1) The election of political party precinct committee officers is not conducted according to a top two primary established by chapter 2, Laws of 2005 (Initiative 872). The candidate of each political party who receives the most votes in the August primary election is declared elected.

(2) RCW 29A.80.051 includes a requirement that, to be declared elected, a candidate for precinct committee officer must receive at least ten percent of the number of votes cast for a candidate of the same party who received the most votes in the precinct. This requirement for election is not in effect because candidates for public office do not represent a political party.





# DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

## FILING FOR OFFICE

### When:

The filing period begins the first Monday in June and ends the following Friday. All declarations of candidacy must be received no later than the close of business on the last day of the filing period. Filings received after this date, regardless of the postmark, are invalid.

Mailed declarations of candidacy may be received up to ten business days before the filing period begins. Declarations of candidacy filed in person must be filed during normal business hours.

### Where:

The declaration of candidacy must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State if the office sought is federal, statewide, or is a legislative, Court of Appeals, or Superior Court office that includes more than one county.

The declaration of candidacy may be filed with either the Office of the Secretary of State or the County Auditor if the office sought is a legislative, Court of Appeals, or Superior Court office that includes only one county.

The declaration of candidacy must be filed with the County Auditor for all other offices. If the office sought is a junior taxing district located in more than one county, the candidate should check with the County Auditor to determine which county is accepting filings. In King County, the office is called the King County Elections Division.

Declarations of candidacy filed with the Office of the Secretary of State may be filed online at [www.secstate.wa.gov](http://www.secstate.wa.gov).

### Cost:

The filing fee is 1% of the salary of the office if the office has a fixed annual salary of more than \$1,000. The filing fee is \$10 if the office has a fixed annual salary of \$1,000 or less. There is no filing fee if the office has no fixed annual salary. The fee is based on the salary in effect at the time of filing. Filing fees are not refundable.

Candidates with insufficient assets or income to pay the filing fee may instead submit a filing fee petition that contains the valid signatures of registered voters equal to the dollar amount of the filing fee.

### Withdrawals:

A candidate for partisan office has until the Thursday following filing week to withdraw.

Once filed, a declaration of candidacy may not be altered. If a candidate decides during the filing period to change the declaration of candidacy, the candidate must withdraw and re-file, which includes the payment of any filing fees.

## PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

INITIAL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REPORTS MUST BE FILED WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF BECOMING A CANDIDATE.

Candidates for federal office, precinct committee officer, cemetery districts, and districts where voters must have special qualifications such as the ownership of land are exempt from state public disclosure requirements.

IF THE OFFICE SOUGHT HAD, AS OF THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION:	PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REPORTS REQUIRED
Fewer than 1,000 registered voters, and the candidate has not received and does not expect to receive contributions of \$5,000 or more in the aggregate.	None.
1,000-4,999 registered voters and an area less than the entire county, and the candidate has not received and does not expect to receive contributions of \$5,000 or more in the aggregate.	Financial Affairs Statement (Form F-1).
5,000 or more registered voters or a countywide area or larger.	Financial Affairs Statement (Form F-1). Campaign Finance Reports ("C" series forms).
The candidate has received or expects to receive contributions of \$5,000 or more in the aggregate.	Financial Affairs Statement (Form F-1). Campaign Finance Reports ("C" series forms).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

**Line 1.** Print your name as you are registered to vote.

**Line 2.** Print the address at which you are registered to vote. Each candidate is responsible for ensuring that he or she meets **all** the qualifications of the office sought **at the time he or she files the declaration of candidacy**.

**Line 3.** Print your campaign's mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Providing a telephone number and e-mail address is recommended, but not required. Contact information will be made available to the public. The election administrator and the Public Disclosure Commission may use the telephone number or e-mail address to provide campaign information to you.

A government office telephone number or e-mail address cannot be used for campaign purposes according to RCW 42.17.130 and RCW 42.52.180.

**Line 4.** Print the name of the office for which you are a candidate. For example, "State Representative...22nd District ...Position 1" or "City Councilman...Olympia...Position 4." Find out **prior** to the filing period for which offices you are eligible to file. Responsibility for filing for the correct office is yours.

**Line 5.** Check the appropriate box. If you assert that you have insufficient assets or income to pay the filing fee, you must submit a filing fee petition, as described in RCW 29A.24.101, with the declaration of candidacy.

**Line 6.** Print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on the ballot. Nicknames are acceptable. You may not use any nickname or title that denotes past or present occupation, including military rank, your position on issues, your political affiliation, or anything intentionally designed to mislead voters.

**Line 7.** If the office is a partisan office, you may state a political party that you personally prefer. Your preference does not imply that you have been nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with you. You also have the option of not stating a political party preference.

If you would like to state your preference, fill in the name of the party, up to 16 characters. The first letter of the party preference will be capitalized (*e.g.*, Democratic). If you want to use initials, separate each letter with a period (*e.g.*, G.O.P.) Your personal party preference will be printed on the ballot as follows:

JOHN SMITH  
(Prefers Example Party)  
JANE DOE  
(States No Party Preference)

If no party name is provided, "(States No Party Preference)" will be printed on the ballot. If you qualify for the general election, the party preference printed on the primary election ballot will be printed the same on the general election ballot.

**Line 8.** Read the oath. Sign the declaration of candidacy only in the presence of a notary public or the officer with whom the declaration is filed.

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Filing No. \_\_\_\_\_ Office Code \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Check ☐ Debit/Credit  
☐ Cash ☐ Filing Fee Petition Voter Registration # \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY**

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ am a registered voter residing at:  
 (PRINT NAME AS YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE)

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (STREET ADDRESS OR RURAL ROUTE) (CITY) (COUNTY) (ZIP)

and, at the time of filing this declaration, I am legally qualified to assume office if elected.

3. My campaign contact information is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (MAILING ADDRESS) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (TELEPHONE NUMBER) (EMAIL ADDRESS)

4. I declare myself as a candidate for the office of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (NAME OF OFFICE including DISTRICT or POSITION NUMBER)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (CONGRESSIONAL OR LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT, COUNTY, CITY, OR OTHER JURISDICTION)

5. Filing Fee (check one):

- ☐ There is no filing fee because the office has no fixed annual salary;  
☐ I am submitting a filing fee of \$10 because the fixed annual salary of the office is \$1,000 or less;  
☐ I am submitting a filing fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_, an amount equal to 1% of the annual salary; or  
☐ I am without sufficient assets or income to pay the filing fee and am submitting a filing fee petition in lieu of this fee.

6. Please print my name on the ballot exactly as follows: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (PLEASE PRINT)

7. If the office is partisan, your party preference, if any, will be printed on the ballot exactly as follows:

- ☐ (Prefers ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Party) or  
☐ (States No Party Preference)

If you fail to check a box or provide a party name, "(States No Party Preference)" will be printed.

I declare that this information is, to the best of my knowledge, true. I also swear, or affirm, that I will support the Constitution and laws of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of Washington.

*Note: Your signature must be personally attested to by a notary public or by the officer with whom the declaration is filed.*

**8. Sign Here X**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE AS REGISTERED TO VOTE)

STATE OF WASHINGTON, COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Signed or Attested before me on \_\_\_\_\_  
 (DATE)

by \_\_\_\_\_  
 (CANDIDATE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (SIGNATURE OF NOTARY)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (TITLE)

MY APPOINTMENT EXPIRES: \_\_\_\_\_

(SEAL OR STAMP)



## Elections officials gear up for new 'top two' primary

By *Stephanie Mathieu*

The rude messages written on ballots to county election officials should cease thanks to the new top-two primary system, but the Cowlitz County Auditor's Office said the new process invites a different set of quirks.

Instead of reading what political party each candidate belongs to, voters will see the phrase "prefers Republican Party" or "prefers Democratic Party," said Amee Paxton, Cowlitz County's chief deputy auditor. And if political candidates aren't careful, typos from their filing forms could end up on the ballot, she said.

Friday is the first day the Auditor's Office will accept candidate filings by mail. Absentee ballots will be mailed on Aug. 1 for the Aug. 19 primary.

This August, the state will conduct a "top two" primary election, meaning voters aren't required to pick a party and can choose from all candidates for each office. In each race, the two winners from each race will advance to the general election, even if they are from the same political party.

The election system might look familiar. It was established in 2004 through Initiative 872, but was overturned in federal District Court after political parties sued on grounds of free association.

"The parties were assuming the voters would be confused" by a top two primary, Paxton said.

The two party system was replaced with a system that required voters to designate a party before voting. The state appealed the District Court decision in 2006, and the U.S. Supreme Court this March restored the top-two process.

When a candidate files to run for an office, he or she must be careful they spell their party's name correctly, Paxton said. Voters could see a wide variety of party names, including the misspelled, non-capitalized, and abbreviated.

"We're going to list it exactly how the candidate writes it on their declaration," Paxton said.

Paxton said she expects the new system to reduce the number of unhappy messages voters have been writing on their ballots.

"We got kind of beat up when we send those out," Paxton said of the old pick-a-party ballots. "People say, 'that's none of your business.' "

For more information about the new primary election, contact the Cowlitz County Elections by phone at (360) 577-3005 or view the county's auditor Web site, [www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/auditor](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/auditor).



[<<Back](#)



## Secretary of State Strikes Back at Top Two Primary Protest

Posted: May 14, 2008 05:16 PM PDT

Updated: May 15, 2008 08:46 AM PDT

KENNEWICK, Wash.- Tempers are flaring again over the state's controversial top-two primary.

This fight continues after a the nation's highest court ruled the top-two primary constitutional.

Secretary of State Sam Reed is sticking to his guns once again, saying what he's said all along, "this is what voters want."

Voters overwhelmingly approved the top-two system two years ago, but a vigorous fight from the two parties held it out of recent elections.

The court battle raged all the way to the supreme court where the vote was upheld.

Now, the parties are attacking it in court again from a different angle saying provisions were left out of the vote, but Reed has no reservations in his plans for the upcoming august primary.

"We have a primary coming up august 19. We will be using the top 2 system, which means when the voters go to vote they no longer will have to pick a party. They will be able to vote for the person of either party and any of those races," Reed said.

The pick-a-party system had drawn considerable controversy in recent elections too.

Reed says he doubts an appeals court judge would have the guts to overturn a 7-2 decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

He calls the latest attempt a desperate try to overturn that clear decision.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2008 WorldNow and KNDO/KNDU. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).





[Click to Print](#)

May, 18, 2008

## ELECTIONS

# Democrats try to name own candidates

Party divided over process; precinct officers hold sway

SAM TAYLOR

The U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling that Washington's top-two primary system is valid has caused consternation among local candidates and political parties.

And now, the 40th District Democrats are scrambling to find a way to hold on to the state Senate seat being vacated by powerful and longtime Democratic Party stalwart Harriet Spanel.

The top-two primary has made political party affiliation obsolete on the ballot. The two candidates who get the most votes in the primary — regardless of party — are the only ones who move on to the November general election.

That has local Democrats, especially in the resoundingly blue 40th District, concerned that they'll divide votes so thoroughly among themselves in primaries — if not now, perhaps in the future, they say — that two Republicans will end up on the November ballot instead.

It may not be an issue this race, however, as only one Republican, Steve Van Luven, is seeking the seat. Van Luven said he wasn't aware of any other Republicans who were going to enter the race.

"I haven't been inviting any," he said, laughing.

But Democrats, who have five candidates so far, want to be sure. They're having what amounts to their own early election at the end of this month and in early June.

## STATE SOLUTION

Washington State Democratic Party officials recently installed rules that require Democrats at the legislative district level to hold a nominating convention to pick a top candidate. If they can't come to an agreement, the rules state, then the state party chairperson will choose a candidate for them.

Only Democratic precinct committee officers get to make that selection. That excludes even the average Democratic Party member from helping to make the top candidate selection.

"A lot of people aren't happy about that," said state Rep. Jeff Morris, D-Mount Vernon, a member of the 40th District delegation. "The conclusion was there is more than one good Democrat in that race."

So 40th District Democrats have decided they'll follow the party rules but also have endorsement meetings in early June.

Each county in the 40th District — which includes all of San Juan County, the northwest part of Skagit County and the southern portion of Whatcom County — will have endorsement meetings and select any candidates they'd like to support, Morris said. Regular members who have been registered with the party for at least 15 days (a change from the usual 30-day membership requirement) can vote in the endorsement process.

That's what historically has happened for the party anyway, including in nonpartisan races. Both Bellingham mayoral candidates Dan Pike and Dan McShane were endorsed by the Whatcom County Democrats in the 2007 election.

"I've personally had a lot of discomfort over trying to exclude people," Morris said. "This whole (top two) lawsuit to begin with started with the party saying they had a right to exclude people. The voters can decide. We're not really in the business of trying to exclude."

## CANDIDATE ISSUES

Not everyone is happy with the new process, including the Democratic Senate candidates.

Steve Hopley, a lifelong Democrat and Anacortes port commissioner, decided to drop his affiliation with the local Democrats for the Senate race. He recently notified the state Public Disclosure Commission that he'll be running as an independent.

Democratic candidate Stephanie Kountouros, who is also known in the county as the coordinator of Whatcom for Obama, said it's unfair to the candidates and to voters that candidates really aren't allowed to campaign.

After all, she said, most candidates only recently announced in the last two months or so. Now they have to vie for a nomination at the end of May. Technically, the state's timeline for announcing candidacies doesn't even begin until June.

"If it was closer to the primary and we had a full chance to run, that makes more sense," Kountouros said. "But if you have five more candidates and they nominate one and it's sort of a kingmaker process now. ... That's where I feel it impedes democracy with the party machine getting in the way."

Kountouros offered another proposal. She suggested allowing the candidates to run into early June, then have a sort of top-two selection process for the local party. That way, she said, candidates have a chance to get their name out to voters.

But none of the other candidates agreed with her, she said, especially when she proposed that those candidates who don't make the top two drop out and support the others.

One thing appears certain, however: This isn't the end of the debate on how parties can remain in some form of control over selection of their candidates.

"It's messy," Kountouros said. "The process is a slow process. It's a lot of people who are not necessarily politicians, and there's a lot of confusion."

*Reach Sam Taylor at [sam.taylor@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:sam.taylor@bellinghamherald.com) or call 715-2263. Read his politics blog at [TheBellinghamHerald.com/blogs](http://TheBellinghamHerald.com/blogs).*



HeraldNet - Snohomish County's online news source

Enterprise | Business Journal | North Sound Dining | County Connection | La Raza

Everett, Washington  
**HeraldNet**

MONDAY, MAY 19, 2008 9:32 am



LOW SALES TAX in Skagit County



[Weather](#) | [Traffic](#) | [WebCams](#) | [Obituaries](#)

[Subscribe/Renew NOW!](#) | [Search](#)

[GO](#) [CLEAR](#)

[NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [BUSINESS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LIVING](#) [OPINION](#) [COMMUNITY](#) [EXTRAS](#) [BLOGS](#)

[Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#) | [Shopping](#)

[Local](#) | [Northwest](#) | [Nation & World](#) | [Politics](#) | [Special Reports](#) | [Photos](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Multimedia](#)

#### RECENT POSTS:

- Boeing engineer challenging McAuliffe [May 18](#)
- Latest poll: Gregoire 52 percent, Rossi 41 percent [May 16](#)
- Rebel yell from Island County Democrat [May 16](#)
- California Supreme Court throws out ban on same-sex marriage [May 15](#)
- McCain's view of life in 2013 [May 15](#)

#### ARCHIVES:

[April 2008](#)

[Go](#)

#### LINKS:

##### LOCAL

- [Island County](#)
- [Snohomish County](#)

##### STATE

- [Governor](#)
- [Legislature](#)
- [Secretary of State](#)

##### U.S.

- [House of Representatives](#)
- [Senate](#)
- [White House](#)

##### USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Federal Election Commission](#)
- [Public Disclosure Commission](#)
- [Thomas \(federal legislation tracking\)](#)
- [TVW](#)

#### RECENT COLUMNS:

- Ticket fillers are no longer required [May 18](#)
- Lias may face a friendly opponent [May 4](#)
- Pointing fingers in firing of analyst [April 27](#)
- County Democrats expect to pack Everett arena at convention [April 6](#)

## THE PETRI DISH

MAY 16, 2008

### Rebel yell from Island County Democrat

Posted at 3:29 pm by Jerry Cornfield

There's been a lot of tumult among Democrats in the 10th Legislative District and it's getting more tumultuous by the day.

Two Democrats, Ann McDonald and Patricia Terry, are vying to unseat Republican Rep. Barbara Bailey.

A couple weeks back the legislative district executive board rebelled against state party rules by deciding to not hold a nominating convention this month as required. Instead, they planned to wait until at least mid-June.

Then a week ago board members reversed course and scheduled a convention next week at which they will choose McDonald or Terry as the party nominee heading into the August primary.

Today McDonald declared she would not participate.

"I don't need a group of three dozen party leaders to reaffirm my credentials as a Democrat," she said in a press release.

Clear and concise – unlike much of the rest of the document.

See if you can read the opening sentence in one breath.

*GREENBANK—Ann McDonald, a longtime Democratic Party leader and candidate for the State Legislature from the 10th District, which includes Island County, the northwest part of Snohomish County and the southwest part of Skagit County, has announced that she will not participate in the so-called "nominating convention", stating her support for making the process open to all 10th LD voters and a personal belief that the non-binding vote among party leaders violates the spirit of the recent Supreme Court ruling on I-932, which established a new "Top Two" primary system.*

When she says I-932, I'm pretty sure she means I-872. Let's continue.

*The recent complicated and confusing Supreme Court decision which upheld I-932 led to both the Republican and Democratic Parties establishing an equally complicated yet largely symbolic nominating and endorsement process.*

*McDonald, while sensitive to the desire of party leaders to make sure that partisan voters have a role in determining the party standard bearer in an election, believes that the large numbers of Democrats and Democratic leaning independents in the district are a better barometer of support and viability than a non-binding tally of twenty or thirty local appointed Party members.*

Voting is set for May 22.

#### READER COMMENTS

Be the first to comment.

You must be a registered user and verify your e-mail address to post comments to blogs or articles on HeraldNet.

To register, [click here](#). To read other terms and conditions, [click here](#).

[Log in](#) or [register](#) to post new comment | [Log out](#)

[Return to The Petri Dish](#)

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Join The Team...

Come work at a fun and adventurous place where the benefits are outstanding and the there is!

**TULALIP**  
RESORT CASINO

HOME DELIVERY  
7 DAYS A WEEK

**\$20.08**  
FOR 3 MONTHS

#### TOP JOBS

[Click to View](#)

**Registered Nurses,**  
**Charge RN, Patient**  
**Care Supervi**  
Mount Vernon, WA  
Skagit Valley Hospital

**Shipper Admin Asst**  
Everett, WA Confidential

**Auto Glass Techs**  
Snohomish County, WA  
Safelite Auto Glass

**Programs Operations**  
Everett, WA Snohomish  
County Corrections

**Accounting / Billing**  
Everett, WA Aramark

[More jobs](#)

**NORTHSOUND**  
**SHOPPING**

ADVERTISEMENT

Shopping Central  
▼ click to enlarge ▼



**Appliance Sales and Service**

- [Judd & Black](#)
- [Judd & Black](#)

**Electronics Sales and Service**

- [Judd & Black](#)
- [Video Only](#)

**Mattresses**

- [Judd & Black](#)

Visit [Shopping Central](#)  
and  
see more specials!

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT



[Contact Us](#) | [Advertiser Services](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Newsstand Locations](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Feedback](#) | [About the Company](#) | [Work@the Herald](#) | [Site Map](#)

© 2008 The Daily Herald Co., Everett, WA.





## **HeraldNet** Everett, Wash.

*Published: Sunday, May 18, 2008*

### **Ticket fillers are no longer required**

They are known as ticket fillers and party files and most wind up political roadkill.

They are the people the Republican and Democratic parties handpick as candidates when no others step forward.

This unique power bestowed upon the parties is intended to ensure opposition -- though not necessarily competition -- in partisan races. In instances when only a Democrat or Republican signs up in the scheduled filing period, the other party is given extra days to round up a foe.

Will Baker is among the most infamous of these chosen ones.

In 2004, state Republican Party leaders wrote in Baker's name as a challenger to incumbent Democratic state Auditor Brian Sonntag. Regret came quickly as they learned Mr. Baker's political exploits in Pierce County amounted to harassing politicians and getting jailed as a consequence.

Barred from erasing Baker from the ballot, GOP officials were not unhappy he lost by a whole lot.

In 1994 in Snohomish County, Republican Jim Krider pulled off a rare feat as a party file by winning. He unseated incumbent Democratic Prosecuting Attorney Seth Dawson.

"We felt we should at least give the voters an alternative and apparently they wanted one," recalled Paul Elvig, who was chairman of the county GOP.

In 2008, there will be no ticket fillers. The practice is gone, a casualty of the marathon battle on the conduct of primary elections.

State officials say because the top-two primary is not a nominating process for the parties, they are not entitled to designate candidates as in the past.

It's ironic. Democratic and Republican parties have spent many years and untold sums trying to wrest control of the primary from the electorate only to lose this unique ability to guarantee they get somebody on the ballot in every partisan race.

This leaves parties with precious little time to recruit willing souls, at least living and breathing ones, to voluntarily enter the velodrome of the 2008 election.

Two weeks from tomorrow, the flag goes up on the traditional filing period. Five days later it comes down.

Right now, several state legislators in Snohomish County are quietly rooting against the parties as they are poised to win re-election without a fight.

Rep. Kirk Pearson, R-Monroe, is getting a free ride again in the 39th Legislative District. Democrats cannot find him an opponent for the second straight election.

Reps. Mike Sells, D-Everett, and John McCoy, D-Tulalip, also are looking at no challengers.

This would make two unopposed elections in a row for Sells and the first for McCoy.

Republicans also may wind up forfeiting against Rep. Hans Dunshee, D-Snohomish.

In a bit of good news, the GOP successfully recruited Dennis Richter of Bothell to take on incumbent state Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe, D-Bothell.

He's no ticket filler, officially, but he may end up a sacrificial lamb, regardless.

---

*Political reporter Jerry Cornfield's blog, The Petri Dish, is at [www.heraldnet.com](http://www.heraldnet.com). He can be heard at 8 a.m. Mondays on the Morning Show on KSER 90.7 FM. Contact him at 360-352-8623 or [jcornfield@heraldnet.com](mailto:jcornfield@heraldnet.com).*



PNWLocalNews.com

 PRINT THISPowered by  Clickability

South Whidbey Record

## House candidate vows to skip convention

By Brian Kelly | May 16, 2008

Ann McDonald, a Democratic candidate for the state Legislature from the 10th District, announced late Friday that she will not participate in the party's nominating convention next week.

10th District Democrats will meet Thursday, May 22, at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon to select candidates to represent the Democratic Party in this year's election.

In a statement to the press, McDonald said it was her "personal belief that the non-binding vote among party leaders violates the spirit of the recent Supreme Court ruling."

In March, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated Washington's top-two primary. The high court reversed a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision that abolished the state's top-two primary system.

Washington voters picked the top-two primary when they passed Initiative 872 in 2004.

"I don't need a group of three dozen party leaders to reaffirm my credentials as a Democrat," McDonald said in the statement.

"I am seeking to represent all the people of the district, and will continue to take my campaign to doorsteps and diners from Oak Harbor to Arlington to meet with people from all walks of life," she said.

McDonald is running against fellow Democrat Patricia Terry for the District 10, Position 2 seat in the State House of Representatives. Both Democrats are hoping to unseat incumbent Republican Barbara Bailey.

Democratic Party rules state that precinct committee officers must vote to select the party's candidates for the ballot at the upcoming convention. If precinct committee officers do not select candidates for the election, the state chairman of the party will pick the candidates.

The 10th District includes Island County and parts of Skagit and Snohomish counties.

---

**Find this article at:**<http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/news/19030749.html>☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Copyright ©2008 Black Press. All rights reserved.

<http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=PNWLocalNews.com&expire=&urlID=28...> 5/19/2008





ie | [Uncategorized](#)

## Washington State Republicans Ditch Party Labels to Compete

by FOXNews.com

Tuesday, June 24, 2008



[Facebook](#) [Stumble Upon](#) [del.icio.us](#) [Digg](#) [Email](#)

### ADVERTISEMENTS

#### Solar Stock Pick - EVSO

Emerging Green Energy Co. Growth Stock Investment  
[www.EvolutionSolar.com](http://www.EvolutionSolar.com)

#### Practice Forex Trading

Free \$100,000 Practice Account With Real-Time...  
[www.acmusa.com](http://www.acmusa.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

By Dan Springer

SEATTLE — In Washington state, where the Republican brand doesn't have the luster it used to, some right-leaning politicians are opting to call themselves anything but "Republican."

When Republican gubernatorial candidate Dino Rossi appears on the primary ballot this summer, his party designation will simply read "G.O.P.," the long-used shorthand for Grand Old Party, a synonym for the Republican Party.

Other candidates are also leaving the Republican moniker behind, thanks to the state's new "top two" primary. Instead of considering a candidate's party, the system pits the top two vote recipients against each other in the state general election. Key to the trend of Republicans shunning their party name, if not the platform — the system allows candidates to choose any party label they want, or none at all.

Local Democratic leaders say it's a cheap trick.

"Dino Rossi and these folks that are trying to hide the ball ... they're trying to hide who they are, what they stand for, where they come from. I think it's shameful," said Dwight Pelz, chairman of the Washington state Democratic Party.

Among those distancing themselves from the "R" word is Curtis Fackler, who is running for state insurance commissioner. His "party affiliation" of choice: "No Party Preference." Fackler also is chairman of the Spokane County chapter of the Republican Party.

"There's 30 percent of people in the state that would not vote for a Republican no matter what, and we want to go around that. We want them to read our statements and see where we're coming from," Fackler said.

According to a recent University of Washington survey, that number might be optimistic. Researchers found more than 50 percent of the state's registered voters have an unfavorable view of the Republican Party, 15 percent more than those who had an unfavorable view of the Democratic Party.

But Steve Beren, a Republican trying to unseat Democratic Congressman Jim McDermott, thinks his colleagues are making a big mistake.

"Have bold colors, wave the Republican flag boldly. Wave fiscal conservatism, social conservatism, immigration conservatism — boldly," Beren said.

For his part, Rossi, who lost the race for governor four years ago by only 133 votes, says he's always used the Grand Old Party nickname.

"It's showing on the Democrats' part how little they think of the voters of the state of Washington, that they somehow don't know the GOP means Republican. It's kind of insulting to the voters, I think," he said.

Other non-Republican contenders have gotten even more creative with their ballot labels.

Among voters' choices: America's Third Party, The Party of Commons and The Salmon/Yoga Party.

[Leave a Comment](#)

#### ADVERTISEMENTS

##### **Solar Stock Pick - EVSO**

Emerging Green Energy Co. Growth Stock Investment  
www.EvolutionSolar.com

##### **Practice Forex Trading**

Free \$100,000 Practice Account With Real-Time Charts, News & Research!  
www.acmusa.com

##### **Countrywide® Home Loans**

No Closing Cost Refi Options. No Points. No Hidden Fees. Call Today  
www.Countrywide.com

[Buy a link here](#)

This entry was posted on Tuesday, June 24th, 2008 at 9:22 am and is filed under [Uncategorized](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

« [Executive Privilege Struggle Pressures Presumptive Nominees](#)

[Bill Clinton Extends Support to Obama](#) »

## 26 Responses to “Washington State Republicans Ditch Party Labels to Compete”

Pages: [\[3\]](#) [2](#) [1](#) » [Show All](#)

### *Comment by Ol' Pol*

June 24th, 2008 at 5:24 pm

I live in Longview, WA and even in this little mill town we are mostly, “Yellow Dog” Dems. We will vote for a “Yellow Dog” before we elect a Republican or Dinos’ GOP folks. Local races are often set by the primar, held the second Tuesday in September

### *Comment by Mike C.*

June 24th, 2008 at 4:20 pm

Conservative laws promote growth through personal responsibilty. Have you heard the term “give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime”?

~~This is the principal difference between “Liberal” and “conservative” in a political sense. The Liberal way is~~

### *Comment by reductio ad hitlerum*

June 24th, 2008 at 4:06 pm

I think everyone here should look up “reductio ad hitlerum”. Please, please, please.

*Comment by Mark...*

June 24th, 2008 at 3:57 pm

Washington State like Oregon and California like the Democrats as the Democrats stand for something for nothing! Look at the amount of Welfare, food stamps, and section 8 given out. If you vote Democrat you are assuring yourself they'll keep the freebies coming!!!!

Democrats equal Socialism!!!!

*Comment by Will*

June 24th, 2008 at 3:37 pm

You are correct Brandon. Hitler was in fact a socialist, hence the Nazi party being the called the party of National Socialist German Worker's Party.

As a matter of fact if you simply subtract the policy of genocide and expansionism there are very few difference between the Nazis and modern Liberals.

*Comment by Mike*

June 24th, 2008 at 3:37 pm

Brandon: You are right, Hitler was in fact in favor of government provided healthcare. He was also anti-religion, anti-big business, for greater governmental control of business, big into the arts, a vegetarian, into holistic medicine, pro-environment, pro-womans rights (as long as they were German woman), and most importantly, he saw himself as the savior of the "middle class". So it makes me laugh when people associate Hitler with "right-wingers". For those who can read, I suggest Jonah Goldberg's "Liberal Fascism" as well as "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich". It shows both a lack of education on the part of people making this mistake as well as a huge distortion of history over the last 60 years. I forget at the moment who wrote that, but it is a great read of this subject. Even if Goldberg picks is apart at times in his book.

Pages: [3] 2 1 » [Show All](#)

[Advertise on Fox News Channel, FOXNews.com and FOX News Radio. Advertising Specifications \(PDF\).](#)

[Terms of use.](#) [Privacy Statement.](#) For FOXNews.com comments write to [foxnewsonline@foxnews.com](mailto:foxnewsonline@foxnews.com); For FOX News Channel comments write to [yourcomments@foxnews.com](mailto:yourcomments@foxnews.com)

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. © 2008 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved. All market data delayed 20 minutes.





Home Local Sports Classifieds Records Opinions Voices Multimedia Blogs Forums Obituaries Local RSS

Sign up to get today's news first:

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

OK

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

# Kirby Chides Swecker in Campaign Kickoff

*State Senate: Challenger Doesn't Mention Other Two Opponents*

Posted June 20, 12:04 pm. E-mail this article to a friend.

By Dan Schreiber  
The Chronicle

State Senate candidate Neal Kirby held a fund-raiser kickoff event on Thursday evening in Centralia, where he delivered a half-hour speech that focused on pointing out his differences with incumbent Rochester Republican Sen. Dan Swecker.

Kirby, also a Republican, did not mention his other two opponents in the District 20 race -- Democrat Chuck Bojarski and Centralia City Councilman Ted Shannon, another Republican.

The state's new top-two primary could play more of a factor in the Senate bid than any other local race because the system allows the two most successful candidates in the Aug. 19 primary to advance to the general election regardless of their party preference.

Although Kirby, 56, stopped his campaign activity earlier this month while Swecker was hospitalized and facing open-heart surgery, he is back to scrutinizing the senator's stances after he announced this week he had returned to normal legislative duties.

Kirby was introduced by his campaign manager, Nathan Yanez. He said Kirby would come up with flood recovery options that are preferred locally, while larger state and national interests focus on protecting the West Coast's main shipping route through the Twin Cities.

"After the flood, I grew incredibly tired of hearing all about I-5," Yanez said.

Kirby contends Swecker is only seeking a solution for the interstate, and not homes and businesses. This was evident, Kirby said, in a Swecker press release shortly after the flood that said I-5 protection would keep commerce flowing, even with surrounding areas submerged.

In previous statements, Swecker has highlighted his more extensive experience, contending a new Republican in the Senate would be ineffective when dealing with a large Democratic majority. Kirby, once a Democrat, was an appointed state representative from Eastern Washington in the 1990s.

"Even though he hasn't held a political office in a long time, he has



**Dan Schreiber, The Chronicle**  
Republican State Senate candidate Neal Kirby held a kickoff event Thursday evening in Centralia, where he scrutinized his Republican opponent -- District 20 incumbent Sen. Dan Swecker of Rochester.

continued his fight for rural areas," Yanez told the crowd of 25 at the upstairs of the downtown Aerie. "He is more than willing and more than able to go up to Olympia."

Kirby said he came from a traveling military family that could be dysfunctional at times. Because of that, he spent time in foster homes, he said, and school was the place where he gained confidence to develop skills.

Now the principal of Edison Elementary School in Centralia, Kirby said education issues have been on top of his agenda since he lived in Oroville and lobbied for school levy policy changes.

"We would drive six hours to Olympia to testify for five minutes and then leave," Kirby said.

Kirby said school levies are unfair to rural areas that have to pay a larger portion in taxes to support the per-student cost at smaller schools. He said the state should pick up the difference created by lower taxes in rural districts, but that's not a big concern of the Democratic majority in Olympia.

"Urban areas have grown so fast," Kirby said. "The Democrats already know all the votes they need can come from the cities."

He said GOP legislators were generally more receptive to his ideas when he presented them at the Capitol.

"It was Republicans who would step up and say we like what you're working for," Kirby said.

But Kirby contends Swecker is a Republican who has bent too far to the will of Democrats and has forgotten the priorities of his district.

"It's time to replace him," Kirby said. "It's time to make a change."

...

*Dan Schreiber covers county government and environmental issues for The Chronicle. He may be reached at 807-8239 or dschreiber@chronline.com.*

---

[Home](#)   [e-Edition](#)   [Archives](#)   [Contact Us](#)   [Commercial Printing](#)   [Purchase Photos](#)

(360) 736-3311   321 N. Pearl, Centralia, Washington 98531.   Copyright © 1996 - 2008 Lafromboise Communications Incorporated

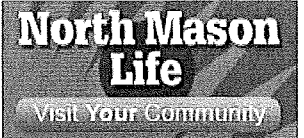


[Login](#) | [Member Center](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Archives](#) | [Subscribe to the paper](#)

[HOME](#) [LOCAL](#) [BUSINESS](#) [SPORTS](#) [COMMUNITIES](#) [FEATURES](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [NEIGHBORS](#) [OPINION](#) [BLOG](#) [JOBS](#) [HOMES](#) [RENTALS](#) [CARS](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

**3RD OF JULY FIREWORKS  
ON THE FJORD**

**CLICK HERE  
FOR MORE INFO!**



## Top Stories



search

site

go

Web Search  
powered by YAHOO! SEARCH

[Home](#) » [Local](#) » [Top Stories](#)

# Reed: Top Two Will Give Voters More Choices

By Steven Gardner (Contact)  
Thursday, June 19, 2008

### Video



Washington voters can pick the candidate they want in the Aug. 19 primary, but some might be surprised to see two candidates from the same party on the ballot come November. Watch »

### BREMERTON

Parties have less power, but voters might have more viable choices under the state's new "top-two" primary system, according to panelists speaking at a conference of statewide county officials on Thursday.

Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed, who developed the standards counties will go by for the Aug. 19 primary, said the election system Washington has is rooted in the state's heritage.

Reed was one of four panelists discussing the primary system at a lunchtime meeting of the Washington State Association of Counties conference, which concludes Friday. The group is meeting at the Kitsap Conference Center along Bremerton's downtown waterfront.

"The people feel with great conviction that they ought to control the election process," Reed said, a feeling that goes back to the 19th century.

Reed was joined in the discussion by former state Democratic Party Chairman Paul Berendt, Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman and Kitsap County Republican Party Chairman Jack Hamilton.

Hamilton said he sees parties eventually responding to the top-two system by employing nominating conventions to field official candidates. That won't change the state's rules for candidates expressing party preference, though, and Hamilton said he can see a day when the party spends as much time explaining why someone isn't a Republican as it does campaigning for its candidate.

Wyman and Reed, however, said the system may result in voters getting more viable choices in November than they've had in previous general elections. If a district is solidly behind one party, getting two choices from within that party might better reflect the area.

"In a district where the choice is between a liberal or a



### most popular

Ten most e-mailed stories from kitsapsun.com:

1. Navy Hires Rent-A-Goats for Bangor Land-Clearing
2. 1-Year-Old Run Over by Teenage Sister in Driveway Dies
3. Her Wish Fulfilled, PO Ballerina Takes Center Stage
4. Paint Can Helped Police Put a Lid on BI Vandalism Case
5. OC Student Graduates From Addict History With Honors
6. Unsatisfying Sex Life Leads to Silverdale Woman's Meltdown
7. One More Charged, One More Arrested in BI Vandalism Case
8. Bremerton Crash Sends Three to Hospital — Two to Harborview
9. Local Oyster Growers Keep Their Eye on Bacteria
10. Preparations Begin for Rotary Rummage Sale and Auction



Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed talked about the state's new top-two primary system to members of the Washington State Association of Counties, in Bremerton for a conference this week. The top-two system will get its first test in August. (CAROLYN YASCHUR | KITSAP SUN)



Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed talked about the state's new top-two primary system to members of the Washington State Association of Counties, in Bremerton for a

STORY TOOLS

# Comments

confered on the week. The top-two system will get its first test in August. (CAROLYN YASCHUR, KITSAP SUN)

conservative Democrat, that may be more of a choice than those districts have had for a while," Wyman said.

Berendt led the Democratic Party when it joined with Republicans, Libertarians, Freedom Socialists, Green Party members and the Washington State Grange in seeking to overturn the former blanket primary. He said the parties were thinking constitutionally when they took the state to court.

Bremerton Schools Seeking an  
"The political parties were there to value when they entered into this long process, that is that we have constitutional rights that for a long time had been violated by the state of Washington and that was we have the right of free association," he said.

Voters passed initiative 872 to establish the top-two primary, but the state implemented a "pick-a-party" system. The parties challenged top two.

What's this?

The U.S. Supreme Court made it possible for the state to use the top-two system when it ruled in March that the parties couldn't prove they were harmed by it. They haven't been harmed, though, because the primary system hasn't been used yet. That changes on Aug. 19.

The actual implementation of the primary could provide the parties their justification to make the system back to court. "We're acutely aware that the parties are probably going to sue us," Wyman said.

Those who have been harmed the most, said Berendt and Hamilton, are third parties, because they will rarely find their candidates on general election ballots.

Join an online conversation about government and politics at the **Kitsap Caucus** blog.

**Refinance \$300,000  
for Only**

\$300,000 Mortgage for only \$965/month. Save \$1,000's - No HomeLoanHelpLine

**Online College .  
Programs - US**

Get matched with up to 5 colleges with 1 form. NexTag.com/online

**Refinance and Save  
\$1,000s**

\$150,000 Mortgage for \$483/month. Compare up to 4 free quotes. pickamortgage.com

Ads by Yahoo!

## Comments

Posted by TomRosendale on June 20, 2008 at 6:49 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Paul Berendt said "the parties were thinking constitutionally when they took the state to court."

I suppose being able to get lists of possible contributors to party campaigns, having the state pay for a parties own private process, and (in the case of the large parties) eliminating competition and expense within the solid Dem. or Rep. areas didn't have a thing to do with their lawsuit against us.

It's no wonder that the numbers of "independents" are growing in this state when party power brokers put the will of a party above the will of the citizenry.

Judging by the last presidential primary, the party power brokers even put their will above their own party membership in this state. Now they are going to sue again because their own greed and manipulation has come back to bite them in their backside. Touché!

**Post your comment**  
(Requires free registration.)

We're happy to offer a home for your discussions, but please be respectful and follow the house rules:

**Stay on topic** - Life's too short to waste.

**Be nice** - If you want your comment gems to survive, you won't defame, threaten or be abusive to other readers or the subjects of our stories. Victims have feelings too. Out of concern for them, we may not allow comments on certain stories.

**Keep it clean** - This is a public forum, open to civil adults and children who do not appreciate your vulgarities or obscenities.

**Be responsible** - Comments are the sole responsibility of those who post them. You'll have no one else to blame if you don't preview your comment carefully and think it through before clicking "submit."

**You are deputized** - Police these comment threads. If you see a comment that violates the rules, click "Suggest removal" to flag that comment for further review by our staff.

**There are consequences** - Rules violators may be banned from commenting.

**Ask questions, share your knowledge, and help us get the story right** - If you are aware of a factual error in a story, want to share facts or background information you know about the story, or think there are issues we

should follow up on, e-mail our local news desk.

[Click here for our full user agreement.](#)

Username:

Password:

[\(Forgotten your password?\)](#)

Your Turn:

[Preview comment](#)



Scripps Newspaper Group — Online  
© 2007 The E.W. Scripps Co.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#)



Comparison shop at [Shopzilla](#) and [BizRate](#) | [uSwitch.com](#) compares gas & electricity, mobile phones, broadband, credit cards and car insurance







PRINTER-FRIENDLY FORMAT

Tacoma, WA - Friday, June 20, 2008

< [Back to Regular Story Page](#)

## Two challengers giving 'top two' a bit of a workout

**PETER CALLAGHAN; THE NEWS TRIBUNE**

Last updated: June 19th, 2008 01:22 AM (PDT)

Candidates in the 27th Legislative District aren't used to having much competition.

Democrats control the Tacoma district, and once elected, incumbents often run unopposed.

So when Rep. Dennis Flannigan drew three opponents – two Republicans and one Democrat – it caught my eye.

When two of the challengers initially listed the same Tacoma address, it caused a raised eyebrow as well.

And finally, when the housemates filed from different parties – one preferring the Democratic Party and the other preferring the Republican Party, it became very interesting.

Meet Jessica Smeall and Brent Wiley. Smeall describes herself as a "Chris Gregoire Democrat" and Wiley describes himself as a "Dino Rossi Republican." They hope to be married by year's end and decided that this exciting political year would be more exciting if they ran for the Legislature.

But this would be only a strange bedfellows story if not for a series of e-mails between Wiley and the third challenger in the race, Republican Dale Woodard. Here's what Wiley wrote, verbatim, to Woodard:

"Would you consider dropping your candidate filing? If you drop out now and let us field a 2nd democrat candidate we can possibly unseat the honorable mr. flannigan with our combination of democrat politics and conservative friends who know we are responsible to their needs. If you do not drop we will probably be forced to field a second moderate republican candidate who we prefer less, but has the correct social liberalness/fiscal conservativeness for this district."

Woodard declined to quit.

So Smeall and Wiley filed on the last day. Three days later, Wiley changed the address on his candidate filing to an office on Center Street – he said to avoid confusion or the appearance of funny business.

"But we're not playing around here," Wiley said. He said he's a lifelong Republican who "grew up here trying to fight Democrats in this district" (though both he and Smeall took Democratic ballots in this year's presidential preference primary, according to state records).

Wiley called the dual candidacies part of a strategy to take advantage of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in favor of the "top two" primary. Under the old blanket primary and the short-lived Montana primary, the Republican who received the most votes would have faced the top Democrat – almost certainly Flannigan – in November. Flannigan likely would have won since the district hasn't elected a Republican since 1962.

But with top two, a moderate Democrat might be able to defeat Flannigan by building a coalition of independents as well as moderates and conservatives of both parties. That's the theory Wiley acknowledged was behind Smeall's candidacy. And based on his e-mail to Woodard, it appears he entered the race to spread out the base GOP vote among two candidates, therefore increasing Smeall's odds of finishing second in the primary.

“We have been given this beautiful chance by the Supreme Court to field two candidates,” Wiley said in an interview this week. Although he claimed he was running to win, he said his fiancée is the second-best candidate in the race.

Opponents of top two will consider this an example of the kind of manipulation they predicted – one party trying to interfere with the primary process of the other party.

Supporters of top two, however, might see this race as an attribute of the new system – giving voters in single-party districts like the 27th a real choice in November, not necessarily between a Democrat and a Republican but between a liberal and a moderate or a liberal and a conservative.

Flannigan finds it all amusing, though he was forced to make an unexpected fundraising appeal after seeing such a crowded field.

“That’s four of a kind, and three more than I was seeking,” he wrote in the appeal.


Peter Callaghan: 253-597-8657

[peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com](mailto:peter.callaghan@thenewstribune.com)

[blogs.thenewstribune.com/politics](http://blogs.thenewstribune.com/politics)

Originally published: June 19th, 2008 01:22 AM (PDT)



[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Advertising Partners](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) |  
[Site Map](#) | [Jobs@The TNT](#) | [RSS](#)  
1950 South State Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405 253-597-8742  
© Copyright 2008 Tacoma News, Inc. A subsidiary of The  
McClatchy Company 



Published June 19, 2008

## **Political committee tied to Olympia Master Builders endorses Halvorson**

Keri Brenner

Thurston County Commission candidate Jon Halvorson won the unanimous endorsement this week of the Affordable Housing Council, the political action committee of Olympia Master Builders.

Laura Kimbrough, executive officer of the PAC, said the panel made its decision after Tuesday's television taping of a debate among Halvorson and three other commission candidates: Sandra Romero, Bill Pilkey and Robin Edmondson. A fifth candidate, Lucius Daye, was unable to attend the taping, sponsored by Master Builders as a public service.

"This is our No. 1 priority race in this election cycle," Kimbrough said.

The debate will air on Thurston Community Television, Comcast Cable Channel 22, eight times in the next several weeks, starting Wednesday.

The committee's main reason for choosing Halvorson, a former Lacey mayor and community volunteer, was his "proven track record for getting diverse groups together and getting results," Kimbrough said Thursday.

She also mentioned his "mainstream appeal," as demonstrated by numerous endorsements from area elected officials, and his knowledge of small business.

The five candidates will face off in the Aug. 19 primary. The top two, regardless of party affiliation, will advance to the Nov. 4 general election.

Romero, a former state legislator and Olympia city councilwoman, has the endorsement of the Thurston County Democratic Party. Edmondson is a Republican, Pilkey an independent.

Romero, who said preserving quality of life and the environment in the county is one of her main issues, is a leader of the citizens group Livable Thurston and has served on the board of land-use watchdog group Futurewise. She is endorsed by Olympia Firefighters, Progressive Majority, Thurston County Conservation Voters and Washington State Women's Political Caucus.

All the candidates say their top priority is to improve fiscal responsibility in the county budget.

The five hopefuls seek to fill the open District 2 seat of longtime incumbent Diane Oberquell, who retires at the end of the year. District 2 covers the eastern third of Thurston County, including Lacey, Yelm and Rainier.

The Master Builders plan to invite the top two vote-getters in the primary to join the two county commission candidates in District 1 for a second televised debate in September.

District 1 includes the middle third of the county. The hopefuls are incumbent Democrat Cathy Wolfe and Republican Judy Wilson.

Keri Brenner covers Thurston County for The Olympian. She can be reached at 360-754-5435 or kbrenner@theolympian.com.