

King County Democrats 2009 General Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name	Jessie Israel
Position sought	Seattle City Council Member
Residence Legislative, County Council and Congressional district	36th District, 4th County Council district, 7 th Congressional District
Are you a Democrat? Are you known as a Democrat?	I am a dues paying member of my home district, the 36 th District Democrats and known as a Democrat. I am also a member of the 34 th LD. I have a long history of working on Democrat causes, campaigns and events. I have consistently served on the Seattle advance teams of now Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, former President Bill Clinton, and then-Presidential candidate John Kerry during their respective visits to the Pacific Northwest.
Campaign Information	
Campaign Name	Jessie for Seattle
Web page	JessieIsrael.com
Campaign Email address	jess@jessieisrael.com
Manager	The Connections Group
Campaign mailing address	Jessie for Seattle PO Box 9100 Seattle WA 98109
Campaign phone number	(206) 443-1990
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Candidate Background: Community service, education, employment and other relevant experience.
Describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, Union affiliation and other relevant experience.

For more than fifteen years I have trained globally and acted locally on leadership development, public-private partnerships and building sustainable communities.

In 2002 King County Parks faced a debilitating financial future after the passage of I-747 to cap property taxes. As a non-mandated service King County Parks faced the prospect of an 80% reduction of our budget. I worked to reshape King County Parks into an entrepreneurial organization less dependent on general fund tax revenue so that green space can remain open regardless of the surrounding fiscal climate. Under my leadership, business revenue now accounts for approximately 25% of the operating budget of King County Parks, and enjoys overwhelming public support. While I now serve on the senior management team of Parks, I was initially hired as a member of the **Teamsters Local 117**, and I enjoy a collaborative working relationship with many Parks staff whom are represented.

Prior to joining King County, I was the Operations Manager of the Center for Women & Democracy (CWD) at the University of Washington. During my tenure, I helped build a pipeline of women leaders and broadened the organizations reach to thousands of women in the United States, Morocco & Cuba,

As a Public Affairs consultant in the 1990's, my clients included progressive candidates and campaigns, several neighborhood planning groups (Central Area, Eastlake, Denny Triangle, Wallingford) and public agencies.

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I am strongly committed to civic engagement outside of my political activities. I serve as a board member for City Year Seattle/King County and the Ballard Food Bank. I previously served as co-chair of the National Women's Political Caucus of Washington and served as a board member of Washington Women United.

I served two years with the United States Peace Corps in Guinea West Africa. Additionally, in 1995 I represented the NGO community to the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing China. Working with the international arm of the Democratic Party – the National Democratic Institute, I was part of a high profile training team preparing candidates and parties for Morocco's 2002 election—resulting in historic jump from 1% to 10% female representation in Parliament.

I graduated from Seattle University with a B.A. Political Science.

What ratings and endorsements have you received?	
Legislative District Democrats	In process
Union Endorsement	In process
Municipal League	In process
SEAMEC	In process
Other Endorsements	So far, I have been endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus , Seattle City Councilmember Jean Godden, Washington Supreme Court Justice (Retired) Bobbe Bridge, Hon. Liz Loomis, State Representative Scott White, State Representative Reuven Carlyle, Ken Alhadeff and have several hundred other individual endorsements from community leaders, environmental leaders and activists listed at www.jessieisrael.com .

Which groups do you plan to ask for an endorsement?

I will actively be seeking endorsements from Democrat, Environmental, Women, Public Safety, GLBT, Labor, Good-Government and business-minded organizations and individuals.

Please answer the following questions*		Yes	No	Qualified
1	Do you support the King County Democratic Platform?	x		
2	Do you support the right of workers (excluding military) to bargain and strike?	x		
3	Do you support affirmative action?	x		
4	Do you support freedom of choice in contraception, abortion and sterilization?	X		
5	Do you support public funding for abortions for poor women?	x		
6	Do you support school vouchers? Do you support charter schools?		X	

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7	Do you support the Davis-Bacon Act?	X		
8	Do you support equal rights for women?	X		
9	Do you support major changes in the way we live to help stop global warming?	X		
10	Do you support the restoration of voting rights to persons convicted of a felony who have served their sentence?	x		

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

* If you answered "Yes" or "Qualified" please explain your answer.

In January my campaign sent out the first email blast to friends and supporters. The email was sent from a home computer, but mistakenly included the governmental email addresses of a number of County employees. As a candidate for City Council, I have an obligation and a commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards. It was an error I regret, and one which will not happen again.

Are you a member of another political party? If so, which ones? Have you ever supported or given money to a candidate from another party in a partisan race? If so, whom?

I am a Democrat. I have always been a Democrat and consistently invest my time and resources to support Democrats.

Are you a member of your local Democratic District Party? Have you contributed financially to any Democratic Organization? Have you been a Precinct Committee Officer? When/Where?

Yes, I am a dues paying member of the 36th District Democrats. I have donated time and/or money to the National Democratic Institute, EMILY's List, DNC as well as numerous candidates.

What are the main messages of your campaign? What is your campaign plan? How many doors have you knocked on to date, pieces of mail planned, budgeting, staffing? What is the fundraising goal for your campaign? How much have you raised to date? Why will you win?

The main messages of my campaign are:

- ✓ Facilitate the development of **strong, walkable communities**. Build sustainable communities. Ensure that families can access a diversity of housing options.
- ✓ Act decisively and boldly with respect to **smart, efficient investments** in transportation, the environment, job training, energy efficiency and innovation. Grow our city's economy to make **neighborhoods better**.
- ✓ Develop **strategic partnerships** with non-profit organizations and other government agencies that help Seattle **strengthen the safety-net** for those most in need in these tough financial times.

I have a detailed campaign plan that includes a robust field campaign and direct mail campaign. The Connections Group (Cathy Allen) serves as the lead consultant to my campaign, Linda Mitchell serves as chief

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fundraiser and Jason Bennett serves as campaign treasurer. Kathleen Paganelli is my campaign coordinator. A number of citizen volunteers are currently supporting my campaign as well. My primary goals for May are fundraising and securing endorsements. I anticipate hiring a full-time campaign manager in June.

I look forward to knocking on doors in every neighborhood! I am currently visiting neighborhood meetings and Legislative District meetings to talk directly with constituents who are involved with our community.

I hope to raise between \$250,000 - \$300,000 in total, of which I hope to raise \$100,000 between now and the primary election in August. To date I have raised \$30,000.

Seattle is ready to see a proactive approach and more results from the Council. I will bring energy, new ideas and new leadership to the position and look forward to serving Seattle on the City Council.

What are the single most pressing issues facing your jurisdiction? What actions would you take if elected?

Strengthening our economy is of prime importance. We need to do this in ways that support good-paying jobs for working people and leverage opportunities to build a sustainable, green economy. My reputation and accomplishments show that **economic and environmental goals go hand in hand** – we do not have to choose one or the other.

We must also retain the high quality of life in Seattle that attracts world-class businesses and human capital. We can do more to enhance our public education system, build safe communities, develop our transit infrastructure and maintain first class and open space. We need to grow in ways that both ensure housing availability for families and support neighborhoods.

If you are a candidate in a contested primary race, what record of performance, ability, experience, personal qualities, and positions on issues distinguish you from your opponent(s)? If you do not receive the nomination, is there any reason you could not support your Democratic opponent in the general election? Please explain.

My life, my reputation and my accomplishments distinguish me as a candidate who understands the need to proactively solve problems through innovative, inclusive, and decisive leadership.

Over the last 12 years, Seattle has defined itself by process for the sake of process. During some of the most prosperous years in our city's history, we missed countless opportunities to invest in our future.

My opponent, Nick Licata, has been singular on the City Council in his ability to stall progress and bold action. He has not proactively championed any new ideas have moved our city forward. Most notably, he has held up work on the Mercer Mess and building Sound Transit – nearly killing our chances at bringing Light Rail to Seattle.

I believe that now more than ever we need strong, innovative leadership on the City Council to move Seattle forward and to ensure that we come out of this economic downturn stronger than ever. The Puget Sound Regional Council estimates that 1.7 million people will move to the region in the next 20 years. We have no time to waste addressing issues of density and transit. When Tim Eyman eliminated 80% of our budget at King County Parks, I led the effort to keep 25,000 acres of County parks and open space available to the public. I will bring that experience to the City Council.

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I am also distinguished as one of only two women out of 15 candidates who have filed to run for a Seattle City Council seat to date. I am campaigning for a non-partisan office.

Do you believe the current structure of taxes and/or fees that generate funds in your area are fair? If not, how would you change it?

In Washington State and King County, we heavily rely on sales tax for revenue. This approach is regressive and unsustainable. Additionally, the cap on our property tax revenues of 1% increase each year (I-747) has left us in a state of permanent fiscal crisis.

The City's overall buying power is decreasing dramatically each year and as a result, we cut to the bone on non-mandated quality-of-life services (Parks, Public Health and Human Services). We now find ourselves at risk of not increasing mandated services such as public safety at a time when we should be bolstering preventive and safety measures. A significant reduction of sales tax revenues collected by King County Metro will soon lead to a decrease in urban bus service right at the time when urban demand is at its highest.

While in Seattle we are fortunate to have a voting public willing to support schools, parks and other quality of life amenities through levies and other property tax increases, in a tough economy citizen's willingness to submit to "a la carte" taxes may be at its threshold. We need to diversify our income base and move to become more equitable.

Many capital infrastructure improvements throughout our City's history have been financed through Local Improvement Districts (LID) and similar public financing tools. This could be another tool for diversifying our revenue stream enabling us to move forward on public works and needed infrastructure development.

King County has a ten year plan to end homelessness. What ideas do you have to increase low income and affordable housing/?

In order to end homelessness and ensure housing for all we need to not only meet long term housing needs for low and middle income housing stock, but also need to support the availability of crisis housing.

Long-term housing: Passage of the Housing Levy renewal must be a priority.

Continue innovation and competitiveness for Federal dollars dedicated to low income housing. This year our region was awarded 50% of the Hope VI dollars allocated for *national* distribution (White Center, Bremerton, Lake City). Our competitiveness is largely due to local Housing Authorities ability to partner with the private sector for financing and Seattle's firm commitment to innovation and green building. The City and County also must continue to do their share and fund the Housing Authority and non-profit housing projects.

The Council (and Olympia) must support Transit Oriented Development that includes strong language and incentives for the replacement and expansion of low income and affordable housing stock.

I support increased height limits for development in areas targeted for density (U District, South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, Northgate). We should require developers that take advantage of the new height limits to include or fund affordable housing projects.

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The City should further explore other financing tools that incentivize the development of low income housing stock.

Crisis housing: Fund mortgage assistance for homeowners on the edge of foreclosure - prevent these at-risk households from the slide into homelessness.

Support targeted housing programs for Veterans, mentally ill, disabled and chemically dependent homeless individuals – all which prove to be cost effective to citizens in the long term.

Work in tandem with the non-profit community to significantly bolster crisis and transitional housing for women and children – who are the largest growing demographic living in poverty.

What role should government play in the healthcare system?

Dramatically rising cost of health care is crippling public and private employers alike. Cost of providing health care continues to be one of the largest growing fixed costs in both employer and family budgets.

As one of the larger employers in the region, the City of Seattle should be on the front lines of supporting programs that encourage preventive care and healthier lifestyles with the goal of flattening rising health care costs. Seattle can do more to reduce costs and promote improved employee health **without compromising worker benefits**. King County and the Puget Sound Health Alliance both provide models for this kind of proactive approach.

As funding for the Basic Health Plan at the State level is reduced, the City of Seattle is going to see an increased strain on Public Health clinics and emergency care. Through partnerships with community based health organizations, universities and Seattle King County Public Health, the City must leverage every dollar available to meet this tidal wave of need.

In the longer term, I believe that access to Healthcare should be a fundamental human right. Everyone should have access to high-quality health care for preventative and emergency care and I support and applaud the efforts of the current administration to move in that direction.

What is your position on civil rights for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered people? What is your position on equal rights for same-sex couples when it comes to benefits, civil unions, marriage and parental rights?

I support full rights of all couples to legally marry, adopt and raise families together. Anything less is unacceptable. My work with the Women's Political Caucus and other progressive organizations over the past 15 years has consistently underlined my commitment to end institutionalized discrimination of all kinds – including discrimination toward the GLBT community.

What creative solutions can you offer to address the problems of the economically disadvantaged?

The foundation for success in addressing the problems of economically disadvantaged include support for housing, employment opportunities, medical care and education. In tough economic times it is even more essential to partner with other organizations to ensure we are being strategic in how we spend available funds that support this critical community safety net.

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As an example, I recently worked with the Technology Access Foundation (TAF) to leverage \$2M in public grant dollars towards building a \$15M state-of-the-art community center for teaching underserved children in South Seattle the math and technology skills that are critical to their success. TAF will operate this center for the next 30 years without support from the crippled County General Fund.

Many infrastructure projects on the horizon will also support good-paying jobs for working men and women. As we build new green infrastructure in neighborhoods and utility infrastructure, we must ensure that job seekers have technical training to take advantage of the durable jobs that are created.

I have read this questionnaire and understand and approve the content and all provided information.		
Printed Name	Jessie Israel	Date
Signature	<i>Jessie Israel</i>	May 3, 2009