

King County Democrats 2009 General Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name	Michael J O'Brien
Position sought	Seattle City Council position 8
Residence Legislative, County Council and Congressional district	43 rd LD, County Council District 4, 7 th Congressional
Are you a Democrat? Are you known as a Democrat?	Yes
Campaign Information	
Campaign Name	O'Brien for Seattle
Web page	www.obrienforseattle.com
Campaign Email address	info@obrienforseattle.com
Manager	Dan Schwartz
Campaign mailing address	604 N 45 th St. Seattle WA 98103
Campaign phone number	206-629-8879
Campaign FAX	

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.

please see attached resume for education, employment, and volunteer information. I was a UFCW 1105 (now UFCW 21) member when I worked at QFC - over 20 years ago. Both parents are/were union members too.

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What ratings and endorsements have you received?	
Legislative District Democrats	37 th Dems
Union Endorsement	
Municipal League	
SEAMEC	
Other Endorsements	Sierra Club, King County Conservation Voters

Which groups do you plan to ask for an endorsement?
All district Democratic organizations, Cascade Bicycle Club, Alki Foundation, SEIU, RHAPAC, UFCW, King County Labor Council

Please answer the following questions*		Yes	No	Qualified
1	Do you support the King County Democratic Platform?	Y		
2	Do you support the right of workers (excluding military) to bargain and strike?	Y		
3	Do you support affirmative action?	Y		
4	Do you support abortion and sterilization?	yes		
5	Do you support public funding for abortions for poor women?	yes		
6	Do you support school vouchers? Do you support charter schools?		N	Q
7	Do you support the Davis-Bacon Act?	yes		
8	Do you support equal rights for women?	yes		
9	Do you support major changes in the way we live to help stop global warming?	yes		
10	Do you support the restoration of voting rights to persons convicted of a felony who have served their sentence?	yes		

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

* If you answered "Yes" or "Qualified" please explain your answer. **I do not support school vouchers, but I am open to the concept of charter schools - I believe there is a way to**

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approach the concept that is good for all, but that many designs to date of a charter school program are problematic.

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 not a member of another party, and have not contributed to a partisan candidate from another party.

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?

I am a member of the 43rd District Democrats. I have not contributed financially to democratic organizations – just progressive orgs and democratic 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?

We must find solutions to our city's problems that work for people, for businesses, and for the environment. For our city to remain healthy and our economy to be sustainable, we need to take care of all three or risk losing them all.

My campaign plan centers on using my experience with grassroots organizing to build a powerful volunteer base and make efficient use of funds. My fundraising goal is \$60,000 for voter contact for the primary. I have raised \$40,000 as of May 1.

I believe I will win because I have demonstrated both my commitment to making definite progress on critical local issues and my ability to work with people from all across our society to get there.

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

A lack of affordable housing is one of Seattle's greatest problems, and has implications for many other issues. Every person who gets a job in Seattle should at least have the option of living here, so the city council needs to anticipate the numbers and types of jobs that are likely to be created in Seattle in the coming years and work to create housing to match those jobs. If elected, I will work to establish this goal as a planning standard, and will pursue reform of our zoning and land use laws to insure that the goal can be met. As we work to create the housing we will need, we should at the same time seek to improve our transportation infrastructure so that we maximize efficient movement of people and freight, and minimize vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This involves rethinking both the way we regulate use of existing infrastructure and our approach to accommodating demand. I would seek new regulations for the use of existing rights-of-way to encourage public transit usage, non-motorized travel, and freight throughput. We should pursue transit-oriented development, increasing density around public transit corridors (light-rail lines and bus rapid transit for starters) in order to create affordable, pedestrian-friendly communities. A suite of such policies, working together, will decrease our carbon footprint and energy needs, make travel within the region more efficient and

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pleasant, and will create living examples of this positive feedback that can spur demand for more of the same.

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.

In my time as Chair of the local Sierra Club, I helped lead the campaign to secure a transit package for our region that served our transportation needs and stayed true to our commitment to fight climate change. This required that I stand in opposition to many accustomed friends and allies, respectfully disagreeing and fighting a civil campaign to enact the policy that I knew would be best for Seattle. I also served for over a year on the Viaduct Stakeholders Committee, working with a broad range of elected officials and other parties from across the political and social spectrum to build consensus and enact policy that advances public good in our region.

I have nearly 15 years of professional experience in finance, including 10 years spent as the Chief Financial Officer for a \$10 million/year local law firm. I understand the intricacies of complex organizations, and have a passion for numbers and details that deeply informs my political thinking. When making decisions and considering policies, I have a highly pragmatic approach that emphasizes measurable results and efficient use of public resources to create the future we want for our city.

As this is a non-partisan race, I believe the last question is inapplicable.

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?

The tax system in this state is very regressive, and hence not fair. At the city level I will fight for revenue sources that are both more equitable and create incentives for us to make better decisions. As an example, I would like to see user fees on roads as a way to better manage the limited road space, and create a revenue source that could replace some of the local sales tax.

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

As stated earlier, I would work to enact a planning requirement for the city to create housing to match jobs at all income levels so that the people who make our city run can live here if they choose. I would also pursue changes to our zoning and land use ordinances in order to make building smaller and more numerous units. The city should partner with banks to create financing mechanisms that encourage building and buying more sustainable, energy efficient housing. I would also pursue measures to finance energy efficiency retrofits for existing buildings. Improving our building stock with measures like these would be great for our environment, and would save people money, easing the housing expense burden all around.

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I also think we need to experiment with more housing investments like 1811 Eastlake (housing first). This type of creativity has proven to actually save money. Breaking out of the mold instead of continuing doing what hasn't worked in the past will be necessary if we are to make the significant changes necessary.

What role should government play in the healthcare system?

I believe that health care is a right, not a privilege. Government has a major role to play in ensuring that all people have access to healthcare. I prefer a single payer system, but am open to a number of models as long as they deliver quality healthcare to everyone.

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 equality for GLBTQ people: all forms of discrimination based on these categories should be illegal. I support full marriage equality. Religious institutions can decide how they treat marriage internally, but church and state should be separate.

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

Many of the ideas already discussed would have positive benefits for low-income people in Seattle. Increasing the supply of sustainably built, affordable housing that is connected to reliable public transit would reduce housing, energy, and transportation costs. Energy inefficiency in housing also disproportionately affects low-income residents who often inhabit the oldest buildings and cannot afford the upfront investments needed to make improvements. Enacting programs such as the energy retrofits proposed earlier would not only help alleviate this burden, it would also create local blue-collar jobs: for instance, home energy auditors, builders, and installers.

I would also seek funding through federal and state sources and private matching grants to increase early education funding. We need to view early education as an investment as opposed to an expense. Studies have shown repeatedly that a dollar invested in early education saves multiple dollars spent later. It improves the long-term outlook for children, and can be a major help in mitigating the problems that arise when parents lack the resources to provide childcare while they work.

I have read this questionnaire and understand and approve the content and all provided information.

Printed Name	Mike O'Brien	Date
Signature		5/28/09