

# TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS.



Paid for by Fuse Votes. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee. Address: PO Box 4897, Seattle, WA 98194. Top 5 Contributors: Spokane County Democrats, Washington State Association for Justice, Justice for All PAC, Ellen L. Ferguson, and SEIU 775 Quality Care Committee. Top 3 Donors to PAC Contributors: Service Employees International Union Political Education & Action Fund, Patricia Dempsey, and Pam Kohlmeier.

# YOUR PROGRESSIVE DONOR GUIDE

### 2025 General Election Introduction & Political Landscape

The Progressive Donor Guide is designed to inform you about the most important races in Washington and help you invest your campaign contributions as effectively as possible. Our goal is to help you support good progressives in the closest races where your contributions can make the biggest impact.

Progressives and Democrats generally did very well in this year's primary. It was hard to find a targeted race where the progressive candidate didn't win, often by unexpectedly wide margins. State Senator Vandana Slatter defeated her conservative Democratic opponent by over 20 points despite being heavily outspent by big corporate donations. In the Seattle City Council election, progressive Dionne Foster led her race against incumbent Sara Nelson by 20 points. Seattle City Attorney candidate Erika Evans held a 22-point margin over incumbent Republican Ann Davidson in a crowded primary.

We still have to finish the job in the general election where many races will be much closer. Following the primary results, we've narrowed our focus to a few key legislative races, as well as important local city council and school board races.

This year there are important opportunities to protect the balance of power and to add more progressives to existing city councils or local governments in swing areas across Washington state, and to support people of color and women running for office. This guide highlights some top candidates that merit your support ahead of the general election.

Our recommendations are focused on progressive candidates with tough races in important places that need your help to win. That doesn't mean you shouldn't contribute to good progressives who aren't on our list. There are more local governments than we could include, and we don't generally target races with multiple progressives - although there are many reasons to support and reward good leaders. This guide generally represents the best progressives in the tightest races.

If you have any questions about these races, or any races in Washington, please feel free to contact Aaron Ostrom (aaron@fusewashington.org).

#### **Table of Contents**

- 01. Political Landscape
- 02. Strongly Recommend
- 05. Recommend
- 07. Battleground States Fund
- 08. Why to Give
- 09. Sample Budget



## **SEN. DEBORAH KRISHNADASAN** FOR STATE SENATE

LD 26 - Includes Kitsap and Pierce counties



The 26th is one of Washington's most competitive swing legislative districts. Deborah Krishnadasan was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the election of Emily Randall to the U.S. House of Representatives. Krishnadasan is

a former Peninsula School Board president and has been a local education advocate who worked for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as well as Microsoft. She is facing Republican State Rep. Michelle Caldier, a longtime conservative voice in the House.

### Why

Defending this seat is critical to maintaining a progressive majority in the State Senate. Caldier has opposed civil rights protections and education funding, and was investigated in 2023 for bullying staff and colleagues. Krishnadasan is a moderately progressive lawmaker in this tough district and has been a team player on difficult issues. She had a narrow lead in the primary and we expect this to be a close race.

### **DEB K FOR SENATE**

11010 Harbor Hill Dr Ste B 277 Gig Harbor, WA 98332 www.secure.actblue.com/donate/debk

### NAREN BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE CITY COUNCIL

POS. 2



Naren Briar is an impressive challenger to longtime conservative Bellevue City Council Member Conrad Lee. Lee has held this office since 1996 and donated \$50,000 to Trump's 2025 inaugural committee. Briar

is running to address Bellevue's housing, transit, and mental and behavioral health needs by pushing for more affordable homes, expanded transit access, and transit-oriented development. If elected, she'd be the most progressive voice on the Council. The daughter of Kurdish refugees, Briar has worked at Meta and been recognized for supporting women and girls in refugee camps.

### Why

This year's political climate offers our best chance in 30 years to flip this seat. The incumbent is a longtime conservative fixture on the Council and is backed by conservative business and development interests, but Briar is a strong, compelling candidate who can help build a progressive majority if she has strong support ahead of the general.

### **BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE**

2620 Bellevue Way NE #131 Bellevue, WA 98004

www.secure.actblue.com/donate/ws-briar

# EASTSIDE PROGRESS: INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE CAMPAIGN BACKING NAREN BRIAR

Defeating a well-funded and entrenched incumbent like Conrad Lee takes more than a strong candidate. Naren Briar needs outside support to overcome Lee's substantial fundraising advantage and greater name recognition. Fuse is organizing a targeted independent expenditure campaign to deliver strategic, impactful messages to voters that expose Lee's record and elevate Briar as the leader who can bring real change to Bellevue.

Independent expenditures cannot be coordinated with the candidate and are not subject to contribution limits.

#### **EASTSIDE PROGRESS**

PO BOX 6312 Bellevue, WA 98008

www.actionnetwork.org/fundraising/support-eastside-progress/

### **RE-ELECT ZACK ZAPPONE**FOR SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL

DISTRICT 3, POS. 2



Zack Zappone is running for re-election to the Spokane City Council, District 3. Zappone has been a strong leader on the Council, advocating for more affordable homes, public safety, and public transportation.

Zappone was a champion for improving housing affordability with multiple programs to incentivize building new affordable homes and breaking down barriers to new construction.

### Why

Zappone represents Spokane's swing council district, and won his last election by 262 votes. Re-electing Zappone is key to maintaining a progressive majority on the Spokane City Council. He faces right-wing challenger Christopher Savage. Zappone's primary was very tight and this will be a highly competitive race in the general election.

### **FRIENDS OF ZACK ZAPPONE**

PO Box 9253
Spokane, Washington 99209
www.secure.actblue.com/donate/
zack-zappone-announcement

## **REP. EDWIN OBRAS**FOR STATE HOUSE

LD 33 - Includes Burien and SW King county



Obras has worked in human services for over 25 years both in nonprofits and for the City of Seattle, with experience that includes homelessness services, anti-hunger, youth development, community safety, and supporting

survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Obras serves on the Board and is a past Board President of the Filipino Community of Seattle. He was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Rep. Tina Orwall was appointed to replace retiring State Senator Karen Keiser. Obras is being challenged by Burien Mayor Kevin Schilling.

### Why

Conservative business interests are hoping to replace a progressive Democrat with a conservative Democrat in this Democratic district. The State House is becoming tougher for progressives, and electing Schilling would make it worse. He's pushed punitive policies on homelessness in Burien, opposing shelters and renters protections. Obras offers a clear alternative, with a lifelong focus on affordable housing, reducing homelessness, and community development. Obras led Schilling in the primary, but with no Republican candidate in the general election, Schilling is likely to gain additional support from Republican voters.

### **FRIENDS OF EDWIN OBRAS**

19550 International Blvd Ste 103 Seatac, WA 98188

www.secure.anedot.com/friends-of-edwin-obras/e7f71097-2b4d-4edb-b31e-81d22b7b4bb1



### **SEN. VICTORIA HUNT** FOR STATE SENATE

LD 5 - Issaquah



Victoria Hunt was appointed to the Senate seat this spring after the sudden and tragic death of Senator Bill Ramos. She was elected to the State House in November of 2024 after serving three terms as an Issaguah City

Council member. In the Legislature, she's been a champion for clean energy, public safety, affordable housing, reproductive health care, and public education. She is being challenged for the seat by former Republican State Rep. Chad Magendanz.

### Why

Defending this seat is crucial to maintaining a progressive majority in the State Senate. This election will fill the seat for three years, and a Magendanz win would undo the result of last year's election in which Ramos defeated Magendanz in a competitive race. Magendanz is a typical anti-abortion Republican who has been known to echo far-right themes about "trans ideology" and "critical race theory." Hunt performed well in the primary, but Magendanz is very well funded and Hunt needs to finish the job in the general election.

### **VICTORIA HUNT FOR SENATE**

PO Box 665 Issaquah, WA 98027

www.secure.anedot.com/victoriahunt/donate

## **OUR VOTES COUNT:** RETAIN & FLIP LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

### INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE

Far-right Moms for Liberty candidates are attempting to take over school boards across the state in order to push harmful agendas that marginalize students and undermine inclusive, evidence-based education. School boards have a huge impact on local public education. They drive policies that determine what students learn, the way schools are run, the support teachers receive, and how resources are allocated.

Fuse and several progressive partner organizations are organizing an independent expenditure program focused on preventing far-right candidates from taking over school boards. Our goal is to retain and expand student-centered, equity-focused majorities and prevent dangerous candidates from flipping control of local school boards. This campaign will target districts that face serious threats from right-wing candidates, including: Highline, Issaquah, Kent, Sunnyside, and Tumwater.

Local school board races are low-profile and confusing and most voters lack clear, reliable information about who candidates are and what they stand for. Our campaign will run a robust voter education program using direct mail, phone calls, and texting to ensure voters can make informed choices that reflect their values and support every student's right to a safe, inclusive, and high-quality public education.

Independent expenditures cannot be coordinated with candidates and are not subject to contribution limits.

### **OUR VOTES COUNT**

PO Box 4897 Seattle, WA 98194

www.actionnetwork.org/fundraising/our-votes-count-retain-flip-local-school-boards/





### NATIONAL LANDSCAPE & BATTLEGROUND STATES FUND

If you are looking for ways to impact the national landscape outside of Washington, Fuse has organized a Battleground States Fund to help our donors maximize the impact and effectiveness of their contributions towards reclaiming the country. Our approach leverages and focuses contributions and targets the most important places. We develop and maintain a strategically-focused list of the most impactful investments that our donors can make

towards winning the country's most important races. Our goal this year is to fund strategies that will help fuel changes that drive more effective campaigns.

If you'd like to learn more about our investment strategy or make a contribution to the fund, please email Serena Carmona-Hester (<a href="mailto:serena@fusewashington.org">serena@fusewashington.org</a>) or Aaron Ostrom (<a href="mailto:aaron@fusewashington.org">aaron@fusewashington.org</a>).

### WHY TO GIVE

We believe there are six basic reasons to make campaign contributions:

#### **SAVE THE COUNTRY**

The rise of far-right ideology in this country is deeply sinister and concerning. MAGA Republicans and white supremacists are dismantling democracy, targeting health care for women and trans people, and promoting racism and violence. We run the risk of losing even more ground on all of our policy advances if far-right Republicans are successful, and with so much at stake in every one of these elections, every donation to support progressive candidates is a tangible and impactful way to fight back against the strengthening MAGA movement.

### **HELP GOOD PEOPLE WIN**

We believe the top priority is to support good progressives in close races who need your contribution to win.

### **REWARD PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP**

Good people who provide strong leadership and take political risks deserve our support. They generate enemies and opposition with good votes, and if we don't support them it sends a powerful negative message to other legislators.

### **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

Contributions can build personal political capital with your elected officials, making you a more effective lobbyist for progressive causes.

### **DEFEAT CONSERVATIVE LEADERS**

Take out incumbents or challengers who are real obstacles to progress.

### **ACHIEVE OUR POLICY GOALS**

Whether your goal is to strengthen laws that fight carbon pollution, create a more equitable tax system, or increase funding for education, investing in the races that are the key to building a majority that supports your goals is the key to our success.

#### **HOW & WHEN TO GIVE**

In person: We recommend making contributions at events or in person where you can make a personal connection with the candidate. This way, you can communicate your concerns and priorities to a candidate when you make a contribution. We don't recommend contributing more than a nominal amount to a non-competitive race unless you are working to strengthen or maintain a relationship with the candidate.

By mail: If you can't contribute in person, we recommend that you mail them a check with a note, telling them you are supporting them because they were recommended in the Fuse Progressive Donor Guide. Sending them a check eliminates the credit card company's cut (which adds up) and allows you to add a message to your contribution.

Online: If you can't donate in person or by check, donating online is a good option.

Independent Expenditures: Most high profile races now have substantial independent efforts to bolster good candidates. Independent expenditures cannot be coordinated with the candidate, and are not subject to contribution limits. We are happy to provide insight and guidance about specific races and independent expenditures if you are interested.

### SAMPLE BUDGET

Contribution limits for local candidates vary depending on the jurisdiction. They are usually \$1,200 per individual for the general election. Our General Election Donor Guide recommendations are based on two different budget levels: \$2,750 and \$5,500.

	\$2,500	\$5,500
STRONGLY RECOMMEND		
<b>SEN. DEBORAH KRISHNADASAN</b> FOR STATE SENATE, LD 26	\$500	\$1,000
NAREN BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE CITY COUNCIL, POSITION 2	\$500	\$1,000
<b>EASTSIDE PROGRESS</b> IE	\$500	\$1,000
ZACK ZAPPONE FOR SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 3, POSITION 2	\$250 \$250	\$700 \$700
<b>REP. EDWIN OBRAS</b> FOR STATE HOUSE, LD 33	<b>4-00</b>	<b>47.60</b>
RECOMMEND		
<b>SEN. VICTORIA HUNT</b> FOR STATE SENATE, LD 5	\$250	\$500
OUR VOTES COUNT SCHOOL BOARD IE	<b>\$500</b>	\$600
TOTAL	\$2,750	\$5,500

FUSE IS A STATE-WIDE ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO A VISION OF SHARED AND SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL PEOPLE.

