

PROGRESSIVE DONOR GUIDE

2025 Primary Election

TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS.



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YOUR PROGRESSIVE DONOR GUIDE

2025 Primary Election Introduction & Political Landscape

The Progressive Donor Guide is designed to let you know 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 progressive leaders in the closest races where your contributions can make the biggest difference.

Washington has an interesting political landscape this year. It's a local election year, but we have four high-stakes special elections that will make or break our power in the Legislature. Odd year elections are often a challenge for progressives because turnout is lower and voters lean older and more conservative. But Democrats have usually done very well when Trump is in the White House and not actually on the ballot himself.

It looks like there won't be any initiatives on the ballot this fall. Brian Heywood is pursuing another set of right-wing initiatives to the Legislature again, including measures to slash property taxes, attack trans youth, and defund public schools. So we can probably expect fights on some set of those issues next year in the Legislature and on the ballot.

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 candidates that merit your support ahead of the primary election. We are likely to add more races in the general election, including school board races, based on research, campaign developments, and the primary election results.

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 a few of those races on our watchlist that could move into our recommended category for the general election.

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

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STRONGLY RECOMMEND

SEN. VANDANA SLATTER FOR STATE SENATE

LD 48 - Redmond/Kirkland



Former Rep. Vandana Slatter was appointed to fill the vacancy created by Senator Patty Kuderer's election as Insurance Commissioner last fall. She is a community leader who has served on the boards of many

organizations and nonprofits, including the Children's Institute for Learning Differences, NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, Global Social Business Partners, and the Cancer Center at Overlake Hospital Foundation. During her time in the House, she was a champion for the environment, education, data privacy, and health care. Prior to being a State Representative, she was Bellevue's first Indian American city council member.

Why

Senator Slatter's race is one of three high stakes special elections that will determine the fate of the progressive majority in the State Senate. She is being challenged for the seat by Rep. Amy Walen, a Mark Mullet-style Democrat who is heavily supported by, and a top priority for, conservative business interests. Slatter is the clear progressive in this race, and we must help her close the fundraising gap with Walen.

VANDANA SLATTER FOR STATE SENATE

PO Box 20664
Seattle, WA 98102

www.secure.actblue.com/donate/vandanaforsenate

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 Sen. Bill Ramos. She was elected to the State House in November of 2024 after serving three terms as an Issaquah 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 critical 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-choice Republican who has been known to echo far right themes about "trans ideology" and "critical race theory."

VICTORIA HUNT FOR SENATE

PO Box 665

Issaquah, WA 98027

www.secure.anedot.com/victoriahunt/donate

SEN. DEBORAH KRISHNADASAN FOR STATE SENATE

LD 26 - Kitsap



Deborah Krishnadasan was the Peninsula School Board president and has been a local education advocate who worked for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as well as Microsoft. Krishnadasan is running to complete the final year

of a vacancy created by the election of Emily Randall to the U.S. House of Representatives. Krishnadasan is facing Republican State Rep. Michelle Caldier, who has been a conservative voice in the House.

Why

Defending this seat is important to maintaining our progressive majority in the State Senate. Caldier has a track record of voting against civil rights protections and education funding. Additionally, a 2023 investigation found that Caldier had bullied and intimidated staffers and fellow legislators. In the 2025 legislative session, Senator Krishnadasan proved to be a quick learner and moderately progressive lawmaker who aims to be a team player on difficult issues.

DEB K FOR SENATE

11010 Harbor Hill Dr Ste B 277

Gig Harbor, WA 98332

www.secure.actblue.com/donate/debk

REP. EDWIN OBRAS FOR STATE HOUSE

LD 33 - Burien/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, 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

The State House has become more challenging for progressive advocates in recent times and Schilling would be another step in the wrong direction. He has led efforts to roll back progressive city policies in Burien, fueling an antagonistic and punitive approach to addressing homelessness. This diverse Democratic district has a stark choice. Obras — who has a lifetime track record of working to address the challenges of affordable housing, homelessness and community development, or Schilling — who has acted to criminalize homelessness while blocking shelters and opposing renter protections.

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

DIONNE FOSTER FOR SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Position 9



Dionne Foster is the past Executive Director of the Washington Progress Alliance and played an important role in passing and defending our state's capital gains tax to fund critical childcare and public education.

She has also worked for the Seattle Foundation and the City of Seattle. Foster is challenging the relatively conservative incumbent councilmember Sara Nelson for one of the two city-wide council seats up for election this year.

Why

The Seattle City Council needs pragmatic progressive leaders as it struggles with major fiscal and civic challenges. Nelson has used her position as City Council President to lead the Council significantly rightward, advocating for corporate interests and attempting to roll back wages and protections for working people. Electing Foster will create a more balanced City Council by adding a tested leader and advocate for working families to make progress on building more affordable homes, fighting pollution, and hiring more behavioral health care professionals to help folks struggling with addiction and mental health crises.

DIONNE FOR SEATTLE

PO Box 23026
Seattle, WA 98102

<https://secure.ngpvan.com/VSYXpKabX0u3HJjeQWPvfQ2e7f71097-2b4d-4edb-b31e-81d22b7b4bb1>

ZACK ZAPPONE FOR SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL

District 3, Position 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 in his

first term. 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 a swing council district in Spokane and won his last race by 262 votes. Re-electing him will maintain a strong progressive majority on the Council. He faces two conservative opponents this year, Cody Arguelles and Christopher Savage. Both are using typical right-wing scapegoat tactics to blame people experiencing homelessness for the problems caused by decades of GOP cuts to essential services.

FRIENDS OF ZACK ZAPPONE

PO Box 9253

Spokane, Washington 99209

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/zack-zappone-announcement?refcode=website-main>

NAREN BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE CITY COUNCIL

Position 2



Naren Briar is challenging Bellevue City Council Member Conrad Lee, a conservative who has been in office since 1996 and donated \$50,000 to Trump's inaugural committee. The daughter of Kurdish refugees, Briar has worked

for Meta and been recognized for her work to help women and girls in refugee camps. She is running because she believes that Bellevue is at an inflection point on issues of housing, transportation, and serving people with mental and behavioral health needs. She is committed to focusing on increasing the number of affordable homes, expanding access to transit, and developing transit-oriented housing in Bellevue. If elected, Briar would be the most progressive member of the Council.

Why

Conrad Lee is a longtime conservative anchor on the Bellevue City Council, and Naren Briar is an exciting young leader who offers a good opportunity to flip this seat and build a progressive majority. She poses a strong challenge to Lee, but he will be able to raise large amounts of conservative developer and corporate money, so it's important to support her campaign early.

BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE

2620 Bellevue Way NE #131

Bellevue, WA 98004

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

WATCH LIST

We have several races (and some categories of races) on our “watch list”, and could easily upgrade them for the General Election. They won’t be decided in the primary and are on this list because it’s not yet clear how competitive their matchups will be. All involve good progressives in races with strategic importance.

BRYAN YAMBE FOR PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL

District 5



Yambe was appointed to the District 5 seat after former Pierce County Council Member Marty Campbell won his campaign for County Assessor-Treasurer in 2024, and he now has to run to retain this seat on the 2025 ballot.

This race is important because it will determine the balance of power on the Pierce County Council, which we cannot afford to lose after working so hard to flip the County Executive last year. Because it’s an off-year with lower voter turnout, and Republicans have no other path to regaining power in Pierce County government, Republicans are expected to put significant resources and capacity behind defeating Yambe and flipping control of the Council.

SCHOOL BOARDS AROUND THE STATE

Dozens of school board seats are up for grabs in districts across the state. In recent years, conservative groups including Moms for Liberty have undertaken a coordinated and concerted effort to seize control of school boards. Their agenda includes banning books, contributing to hostile school environments for marginalized students (particularly LGBTQ+ and students of color), and allowing parents to subvert community norms within schools and curriculums. We will continue to monitor races and elevate situations where divisive candidates are mounting strong runs.

SEATTLE CITY ATTORNEY

Seattle will have an engaging City Attorney's race. The Republican incumbent, Ann Davidson, was elected after a 2021 primary upset gave her a weak general election matchup. She has eliminated the community court that diverted people into treatment instead of jail and was sued by the ACLU for refusing to send criminal cases to an elected municipal Judge who she felt treated defendants too favorably.

There are three well-qualified progressives challenging Davidson, all lawyers from different specialties within the legal system. Nathan Rouse is a public defender with King County, Erika Evans has served as an assistant city attorney and a federal prosecutor, and Rory O'Sullivan is a former legal aid lawyer with an employment law practice best known for his work on the campaign to bring Democracy Vouchers to Seattle.

OTHER BELLEVUE RACES

This year offers a unique opportunity to reshape the landscape of the Bellevue City Council. Due to the retirement of John Stokes and the appointment of Janice Zahn to the State House, a total of five of the seven seats on the council will be on the November ballot. We must defend these seats formerly held by the two most progressive members of the council. In addition, the council's two remaining Republicans, Conrad Lee and Jared Nieuwenhuis, are facing legitimate challenges this year. While the race is still early, at this point we believe Lee is particularly vulnerable to an energetic challenge from progressive Naren Briar. Given the council's current dynamics, removing even one conservative voice could open the door to long-overdue progressive change in Bellevue.

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, targets the most important places, and invests in the most effective strategies. 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. If you'd like to learn more about our investment strategy or make a contribution to the fund, please email Serena Carmona-Hester (serena@fusewashington.org) or Aaron Ostrom (aaron@fusewashington.org).

WHY TO GIVE

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

SAVE THE COUNTRY

The rise of far right-wing extremism in this country is deeply sinister and concerning. MAGA Republicans and white supremacists are attacking democracy, rolling the clock backwards on women's health and other issues, while promoting racism and violence. We run the risk of losing ground on all of our policy advances if far right Republicans win, 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 rising MAGA extremism.

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 then 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 essential to building a majority that supports your goals is the key to 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. The individual contribution limit for state races is \$1,200 for the primary and \$1,200 for the general for a total of \$2,400. Our Budget Levels are based on sample political budgets of \$5,000 and \$10,000. Our Primary Donor Guide recommends reserving \$2,000 and \$5,000 of those respective budgets for the General Election.

	\$5,000	\$10,000
STRONGLY RECOMMEND		
VANDANA SLATTER FOR STATE SENATE, LD 48	\$450	\$1,000
VICTORIA HUNT FOR STATE SENATE, LD 5	\$450	\$1,000
DEBORAH KRISHNADASAN FOR STATE SENATE, LD 26	\$450	\$1,000
EDWIN OBRAS STATE HOUSE, LD 33	\$450	\$1,000
DIONNE FOSTER FOR SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL, POSITION 9	\$650*	
ZACK ZAPPONE FOR SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 3, POSITION 2	\$250	\$400
NAREN BRIAR FOR BELLEVUE CITY COUNCIL, POSITION 2	\$300	\$600
SAVE FOR GENERAL	\$2,000	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$5,000	\$10,00

*This is the maximum contribution and includes any funds you contribute to her with Democracy Vouchers.

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

