Completed forms are not confidential and will be published on-line

**2024 Pierce County Democrats Endorsement Questionnaire**

**-Judicial Races-**

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_Scott Peters\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position sought: \_\_\_\_\_Pierce County Superior Court Judge Position #9\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For judicial endorsements, the Pierce County Democratic Central Committee (PCDCC) seeks to endorse well-qualified candidates with the education, experience, ability, and temperament to reach just decisions in the cases brought before them, who will also work to make the justice system more understandable, accessible, and equitable for all. The Endorsements Committee screens candidates and then makes endorsement recommendations to the PCDCC.

The PCDCC may withdraw endorsement of any judicial candidate if they determine the candidate has acted in conflict with the answers provided during the screening process or it determines the candidate has violated the letter or the spirit of the Code of Judicial Conduct or the Rules of Professional Conduct.

\*You may respond N/A (not applicable) if appropriate. Expand or decrease space as needed.

Questions

1. Why are you running for this position?

I’m running for Superior Court Judge to ensure fairness and accountability and to uphold justice for all. As a Pierce County Deputy Prosecutor, I’ve served as a Team Chief of various units overseeing many of our community’s highest profile cases. I currently handle charging and competency decisions, ensuring that dangerous offenders are held accountable, while those better served by treatment receive the help they need. My depth of experience across units and with the most important cases uniquely qualifies me for this position.

In 2016, I was diagnosed with 2 separate cancers at the same time. I went through almost 2 years of treatment and have been in remission since 2018. That experience has greatly shaped and changed my life. After going through that experience, I became committed to achieving my goal of becoming a judge.

1. What are your qualifications for seeking this office, and what was the nature of your legal background and experience?

I have been employed at the Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office for about 20 years. I started as a legal intern in the Prosecutor’s Office while I was still in law school. During my time in the Prosecutor’s Office, I have served in almost every criminal unit. I have also served as the team lead of numerous units including: Property Crimes Unit, Identity Theft Unit, Drug Unit, High Priority Offender Unit, DUI Supervisor in the Misdemeanor Unit, and the Special Assault Unit. I have handled numerous homicides and high-profile cases during my time in the Prosecutor’s Office. I have provided numerous internal trainings and have provided numerous community outreach trainings. The attorneys in the Prosecutor’s Office are unionized into a Guild, and I currently serve as our Guild President. I also serve as a Pro Tem Judge with Olympia Municipal Court. I have covered numerous criminal and civil matters while serving as a Pro Tem Judge.

1. If your past legal practice emphasized one area of law, how will you prepare to decide other disputes?

I have already started researching and taking classes covering civil and family law issues. In addition, I have spent time talking with civil and family law attorneys to understand what I need to get up to speed on. I have also tried to cover civil dockets when serving as a Pro Tem to continue my education and growth.

1. What are the most important issues for the jurisdiction you would serve or for the court you seek to join?

I think the most important issue right now is the backlog of cases that are filed. My extensive criminal and jury trial experience allows me to come in and start working on this backlog. In addition, in my current position, I am tasked with handling a large volume of cases and have been able to do this successfully.

1. Why should the Pierce County Democratic Party support you for this position?

My depth of knowledge and experience is key to ensuring all parties receive a fair and equitable experience with the Court. My extensive jury trial experience allows me to come in and immediately start conducting jury trials effectively and correctly avoiding mistakes that may result from someone who is inexperienced that would cost all parties and the community. In addition, I have support from numerous Democratic elected officials.

Also, I give back and try to improve Pierce County. I am the Chair of a non-profit organization called Lawyers Helping Hungry Children. We hold an annual breakfast, gathering the legal community, to raise money that we donate to non-profits that have programs that fight childhood hunger in Pierce County. My wife, daughter and I also captain a Relay for Life team to give back to other cancer patients, caregivers and survivors.

1. Please list your key endorsements:

I have endorsements from: Pierce County Council members Ryan Mello, Robyn Denson, Marty Campbell, and Jani Hitchen; Pierce County Superior Court Judges Grant Blinn, Matt Thomas, Gretchen Leanderson, and Angelica Williams; Pierce County District Court Judge Kevin McCann; and Tacoma Municipal Judge Steve Krupa. I have numerous endorsements from local attorneys, including from defense attorneys and civil attorneys. A full list of my endorsements can be found on my website at scottforsuperiorcourt.com.

1. Provide ratings from any Bar Associations, either in this election or a prior one.

Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association - Qualified

1. Has any professional or disciplinary body made a finding that you violated any rule or code of judicial or professional conduct? If so, please provide a full explanation.

No.

1. To what Bar groups or sections do you belong now or have belonged to in the past?

Washington State Bar Association

Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association

1. How have you supported pro bono or low-cost legal services?

As a public servant, I have seen the need for and importance of those services. As the Team Lead of our Special Assault Unit, I would present trainings to Rebuilding Hope for those that were providing assistance and support for victims of sexual abuse.

1. Do you have a judicial philosophy? If so, please describe:

My judicial philosophy is to make sure all parties are heard, follow the rules and everyone is held accountable. My goal is to put in the work to make sure everyone that appears in front of me knows that I am listening and always trying to make the correct decision based on the law and facts.

1. How is being a judge different than being an attorney?

As an attorney you are taking a position and advocating for that position. A judge is a neutral arbitrator and is not taking a position. Rather the judge is listening to the facts presented and arguments of the parties and applying the law that is applicable and making a decision.

**IF ELECTED TO THIS POSITION…..**

1. How would you educate and inform the public about your court and the justice system?

I am currently involved in events like the YMCA Mock Trial, Tacoma Pierce County Law Day, Safe Streets meetings, and other community events. If elected I would continue to attend events like these, because they give me the opportunity to interact with the public and talk about the court system and how it functions in Pierce County.

1. What would you do to provide greater access to the civil judicial system, regardless of economic status?

I am currently on a working group trying to increase technology in the courtroom. The working group has members from the prosecutor’s office, defense attorneys, and court staff. Increasing technology is key because it helps people find greater access to pro bono or low-cost attorneys and access to justice for those who have the ability to appear remotely and not in person.

1. Do you believe the judicial system produces different results for different demographics? If so, what would you do to remedy that problem?

If I thought this was happening, the key would be to find the root issue that was causing this problem. Once the root cause was found, I would take steps to address that root issue. I have been on a working group looking at bail reform. The working group includes members from the prosecutor’s office, defense attorneys, court staff, judges, and community members. This group looked at how bail affects different groups of people and how to make changes to the bail system.

In civil cases, this could happen with individuals that cannot access attorneys. One way to address this is to increase remote hearings, which would increase the opportunities for pro bono attorneys to appear.

1. Do you believe there is a problem with the way legal financial obligations (LFOs) or other costs and fines are currently imposed upon criminal defendants? If so, what would you do to remedy that problem?

There have been several law changes and cases that have come out to address legal financial obligations in criminal cases and to address previously imposed financial obligations. Recently, there has even been changes to restitution. I believe those changes are addressing these issues.

1. Do you support or oppose alternatives to criminal prosecution, such as drug courts, mental health courts, diversion programs, etc.? What changes would you make, if any?

During my time in the prosecutor’s office, I have been extensively involved with alternative courts. I have made numerous referrals to those programs. I have seen the impact those programs have at addressing the underlying issues that may result in criminal behavior. I think one of the issues these programs have is wait lists to have defendants screened to see if they are eligible. I think it would be important to push for an increase in personnel to decrease these wait times.

1. How would you approach any caseload or court congestion issues?

In order to address the backlog of cases we need judges that can handle a large volume of complex cases. In addition, these need to be handled correctly so that cases do not need to be tried more than once. My extensive criminal and jury trial experience allows me to come in and start working on this backlog. In addition, in my current position, I am tasked with handling a large volume of cases and have been able to do this successfully.

1. Is there anything else you would like to share with the Committee?

The Prosecutor’s office has a Guild: the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney’s Association. In 2013, I was elected as our 1st Vice President. In 2014, I became our President and continue to serve as our President, having been elected by our membership every 2 years since 2014. As the President, I have been involved in numerous contract negotiations, grievances, and other Guild matters.