

25th Legislative District Democrats

Candidate Endorsement Request (*District Court*)

Full Name (as shown on ballot) KARL WILLIAMS

Office Sought: PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT JUDGE #6 Today's Date: MAY 30, 2018

Years in the district that you want to represent: I HAVE LIVED IN PIERCE COUNTY FOR 45 YEARS.

Campaign Information

Name of Campaign: KARL WILLIAMS FOR JUDGE Campaign Manager: _____

Campaign Address: 5000 BRIDGEPORT WAY WEST UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA 98467

Campaign Phone: (253) 460-2973 Email: karlwilliamsforjudge@gmail.com

Website: www.karlwilliamsforjudge.com

Social media:

Facebook: Karl Williams for Judge Twitter: _____

Other: _____

How much money do you intend to spend on this campaign? \$70,000 How much in personal funds do you intend to spend? \$50,000 How much have you raised so far? N/A

Are you using union printers and/or sign shops to do your campaign printing? Yes

Questionnaire

Please keep your answers brief.

Please list your qualifications for seeking office:

Experience is one of the most important qualifications. My 22 years on the bench as a Pro Tem Judge are invaluable, as I have heard every type of case in District Court. I will draw upon my experience to make proper decisions in the cases that will come before me as District Court Judge.

Judicial temperament is also essential. Judges have to be in control of their emotions, in order to effectively manage a courtroom. Judges have to understand that the people that come before them are often nervous, inexperienced and intimidated. My tone of voice and my attitude towards individuals make all the difference in how they process their court experience.

Preparation and knowledge of the law are essential qualifications as well. As a Pro Tem Judge, I pride myself on being prepared for each hearing by reading all the materials submitted prior. I familiarize myself with the law, to confirm that my understanding is current and the law has not evolved or changed since my last review.

What special skills do you bring to the bench?

I have served as an Arbitrator for the Pierce and King County Superior Court since 1992. I have served as a Mediator for Pierce County District Court and the Center for Dialog and Resolution since 1999.

Please list your reasons for seeking office:

Pierce County needs judges that care not only about public safety but also community. As a District Court Judge my first obligation will be to keep the public safe. However, in my experience as a Pro Tem, I find that the best long-term solutions for maintaining safety often involve understanding the underlying problems of the individuals and steering those individuals to community resources to address these problems. My goal is to help defendants realize what changes they need to make and provide them with incentive to change, although jail time can be a powerful deterrent, jail alone is not going to address issues such as addiction or mental health. I do this because when you help someone make a change for the better you improve the life of that individual and make the community safer not just for the period of time that individual is in jail, but for a lifetime. The type of District Court Judge I aspire to be will provide the opportunity to help people turn their lives around. Pierce County deserves the best. I have been rated "Exceptionally Well Qualified" by the Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association, the Washington Women's Lawyers Association and the Pierce County Minority Bar Association. I am passionate about serving Pierce County as a District Court Judge.

Have you been involved in partisan politics in Washington State before? Please give details:

I am a member of the 28th Legislative Democrats.

Have you run for an office before? Please give details:

I have previously sought offices and appointments for Superior and District Court Judge positions in Pierce County.

Have you held office, either elected or appointed? Please give details:

I was appointed and served as a Precinct Committee Officer for the 28th Legislative District.

What do you believe will be the three most important issues in your campaign?

Access to Justice; Judicial Independence; Advances in Technology.

What is the role of the judge?

It is the judge's responsibility to ensure that the parties are afforded a fair and impartial hearing. In the context of criminal law public safety is a judge's primary concern. It is also the role of a judge to determine what is best for an individual defendant. Judges in Pierce County District Court have the ability to require evaluations and treatment for substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence.

Have you previously served on the bench?

I have served as a Pro Tem Judge for the Pierce County District Court, Puyallup Municipal Court; Fife Municipal Court; and Ruston Municipal Court.

Please summarize your legal practice (prior to taking the bench if applicable).

In my 30+ years of practicing law, I have practice in every area of law both civil and criminal. Currently, my practice does not include the area of family law. I described my practice as a general practice. I pride myself on being able to provide full service to my clients.

What do you perceive as the greatest obstacles to justice, if any?

Money is the most significant barrier to access to justice. Language is also a barrier.

Do you believe there is under-representation of women or people of color in the court system? If so, how would you work to correct the problem?

Women, people of color, members of the LGBTQ are underrepresented in the legal profession and even more so as judges. I chose to be a role model. As a District Court Judge I will encourage all underrepresented groups to join the legal profession and if inclined to aspire to become a judge.

Do you believe that all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system? If not, what can be done to provide wider and better access?

No I don't believe all citizens have adequate access to legal help and the legal system. However, Pierce County District Court works hard to give adequate access to their legal system. Language is a barrier to access. Pierce County has free interpreters to assist in criminal cases. The court also has free interpreters to assist in traffic infractions. But these services are not available in small claims and civil cases. Perhaps the court should consider providing free interpreters for all court proceedings to ensure that all individuals coming into court are able to understand their case proceedings fully.

Pierce County has consolidated all of its outlying courts to the downtown location. The increased distance to court for the individuals in the outlying areas has created various problems in court scheduling, and transportation to hearings. To address these concerns, the court created better access through technology. Some technological advances in Pierce County District Court include online access to schedule a traffic hearing; the ability to electronically file a traffic hearing by mail, and ability to chat online with the clerk's office. I would suggest that these online services be provided in several languages to increase Pierce County District Court's accessibility and increase efficiency.

The Court has yet to allow electronic filing and/or retrieval of records in civil cases. However, there are plans to do so in the future. This will hopefully allow better access to everyone.

What criteria would you use for deciding whether to impose or affirm sentences outside of the standard ranges?

Standard range is not used in District Court. In District Court the judge can sentence an individual up to the maximum allowed by law. In the case of gross misdemeanors, the maximum is 365 days in jail and a \$5000 fine; Misdemeanors are 90 days in jail and a \$1000 fine. District Court judges must use their discretion to fashion a sentence that not only protects the community but also assist the individual in making the life changes necessary so the offensive behavior does not reoccur.

As a prospective judge, what do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

Experience is my greatest strength. I have 22 years as a Pro Tem Judge in Pierce County District Court. I have presided over every type of case in District Court. The ability to treat everyone with respect and patience is also a strength I possess. I consider my caring about people a strength. A judge must balance the needs of a particular individual against the needs of the community. Jail is a strong deterrent, but it will not solve the issue of addiction or mental health. Pierce County District Court has a Mental Health court; a Veteran's Court and a Resource center to assist these individuals.

If you became aware of unethical conduct on the part of a trial advocate in a case in which you were presiding, how would you handle it? Do you believe judges should be required to report attorney misconduct?

A judge's first responsibility in presiding over a case is to ensure that all participants and given a fair and impartial trial. Whatever conduct I become aware of must be viewed through that lens. Judges have the discretion to report attorney misconduct. I do not believe imposing a requirement on judges to report attorney misconduct would be beneficial to the legal system. To do so would put the judge in a position to have to make a factual determination as to whether or not the conduct engaged in required reporting. A requirement to report attorney misconduct may be counterproductive to a fair and impartial trial.

What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in the past? Currently?

Tacoma Narrows Rotary 2005 to present; Rotary District 5020 Youth Protection Officer 2017-18. Board member Community Health Care 2003-2004. Coach/Asst. Coach UP Parks and Metro Parks 1999-2005. Tutor Werlin Reading Program 2002-2003. Black Collective member 1998-present. Allen AME Church member 1994-present. American Inn of the Courts member 2009 to 2015. YMCA Black Achievers facilitator 1999. Pierce County Minority Bar Association Youth and Law Forum facilitator 1999- present.

While serving on the bench, do you believe you have a role in bringing important legal or judicial issues before the public or the legislature? Why or why not? What should your role be?

I believe a judge has an obligation to bring legal and judicial issues that affect access to justice and the administration of the court before the legislature as necessary to obtain funding. Judges are cautioned not to give their personal opinion on legal issues as that might create an appearance of bias if the issue should come before them in a case.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

Provide all parties a fair and impartial hearing. Treat everyone with respect and patience. Know the law. Protect the public. If you have the opportunity to help someone make a beneficial life change take advantage of that opportunity.

What would you do to make District Court more efficient?

Currently, if you want copies of records in Pierce County District Court you have to physically go to the clerk's office and request the file, determine what copies you want and have someone in the clerk's office physically make the copies for you. If records started being filed and stored electronically, that could be a means for accessing records more easily. It would simply be more efficient. If accessing and copying records can be done online, it should reduce the cost of per-page fees significantly.

The Court has yet to allow electronic filing and/or retrieval of records in civil cases. However, there are plans to do so in the future. This will hopefully allow better access to everyone.

What is your vision for the future of our judicial system: What changes would you advocate and why?

My vision for the future of the judicial system would include recognizing the fact that people of color and other minority groups are underrepresented in every area of administration of the judicial system and make a conscious effort to bring more underrepresented members into the administration of the judicial system.

Why should the 25th Legislative District Democrats support you over any other candidates running for this position?

Judges are an integral part of the Justice System and Pierce County deserves the best. My 22 years of experience on the bench and my 30 years of practicing law make me the most qualified candidate for District Court Judge. I have been given the highest rating, "Exceptionally Well Qualified" by the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association, Washington Woman Lawyers and the Pierce County Minority Bar Association. I have no negative history regarding my conduct in court.

Are there any additional comments you would like to share with the 25th Legislative District Democrats?

My experience as a Pro Tem Judge has taught me that every time I take the bench it is an opportunity to learn and grow. The law is not stagnant it is constantly evolving. I have to be fair-minded and flexible to give each case the due and careful consideration it deserves. When elected I will serve as a positive influence and role model for those with whom I encounter in the court room and in the community.

My signature below signifies that I am seeking the endorsement of the 25th District Democrats. I understand that this endorsement may or may not come with monetary support. I also understand that the 25th District Democrats may withdraw its endorsement.

Candidate Signature:  _____

Today's Date: May 30, 2018

Please return your completed questionnaire to edwherde@gmail.com