

King County Democrats

2018 Candidate Questionnaire Judicial Level

Candidate Name	Steve Gonzalez	
Position Sought	Supreme Court, Position 8	
Home County and Legislative District	Thurston County, 22nd LD	
Campaign Contact Information	Mailing address: 603 Stewart Street, #819 Seattle, WA 98101	Phone: 206-707-9239 Fax: N/A
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Campaign manager or point of contact	Kenneth Fockele, ken@justicegonzalez.com , 678-316-6799	
Consultant(s)	NWP, Blue Wave	

Part I – Candidate Background

Please briefly describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, past union affiliation, and other relevant experience. Attach a resume with more complete history.

I am rated Exceptionally Well Qualified for the Supreme Court by 10 bar associations in Washington, including Washington Women Lawyers and the newly formed Veterans' Bar Association. I was honored to receive Outstanding Judge of the Year Awards from multiple organizations including the Washington State Bar Association.

Outside the Court, I am passionate about community engagement and service to others. I participate in the Northwest Minority Jobs Fair, and serve as Board member for the Washington Leadership Institute, an organization that aims to develop legal professionals and community leaders who reflect the diversity of Washington State.

I served as union spokesperson and I was on the negotiating team for my union when I was an Assistant City Attorney in Seattle.

Please see more in response to the next question below, in the attached resume, and at my website: <http://justicegonzalez.com/>.

Describe your history of involvement in Washington state politics. What offices have you previously sought election or appointment to? What campaigns have you worked on?

I won election to the Washington Supreme Court in 2012. Before joining the Court, I served for ten years as a trial judge on the King County Superior Court, and served as a Federal and municipal criminal prosecutor. Prior to joining the court in King County, I practiced both criminal and civil law. I was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Western District of Washington where I was part of the team that successfully prosecuted the international terrorism case U.S. v. Ressay. I also prosecuted organized crime cases and served as the Hate Crimes Prosecution Coordinator. After September 11, I lectured on international terrorism prosecution to U.S. Attorneys in Washington D.C. I have also served as a Domestic Violence Prosecutor for the City of Seattle. I have worked on numerous judicial campaigns including my own. For example, I worked to help Judge Veronica Galvan get elected when she was a municipal court judge and I served on the campaign committee for Justice Mary Yu.

What prompted you to run for this office?

I love the job and it is an honor to serve. I want to continue to serve as a Supreme Court Justice because I bring valuable superior court trial experience and experience working with interpreters and the Access to Justice community. I also bring administration experience as former Chair of the Access to Justice Board. I am rated Exceptionally Well Qualified for the job. Finally, I enjoy mentoring my law clerks and speaking to students and the public about the importance of civics and service.

Describe the progress of your campaign so far. What kind of reception is your campaign getting? Are you running unopposed, or do you have an opponent? How will your campaign appeal to the voters?

In a short time, I have received a tremendous amount of support around the state. We have volunteer groups in the Seattle, Olympia, Vancouver, Yakima, Tri-Cities, and Spokane areas planning events and conducting outreach. The voters have responded very positively to my long experience and the contrast between my qualifications and those of my opponent.

Please answer the following questions.

		Yes*	No
1	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments?		X
2	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		X

* If you answered "Yes" to either of the above, please explain your answer:

Part II – Ratings and endorsements

What endorsements and ratings from bar associations have you received to date?

Bar Association ratings:	<p>Rated Exceptionally Well Qualified for Re-Election to the Washington Supreme Court by:</p> <p>Latina/o Bar Association of Washington Loren Miller Bar Association Washington Women Lawyers Veterans Bar Association of Washington Cardozo Society Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association Pierce County Minority Bar Association King County Bar Association QLaw Joint Asian Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee</p> <p>Rated Well Qualified by WAPA</p>
Endorsements:	<p>Some organizations and elected officials who have already endorsed me for reelection include:</p> <p>Northwest Tribal Court Judges' Association Congresswoman Suzan DelBene Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal Former Governor Chris Gregoire Former Governor Gary Locke Secretary of State Kim Wyman Attorney General Bob Ferguson</p>

If you have previously sought elected office, what notable endorsements did you receive?

In 2012, I was very proud to be endorsed by the King County Democrats for my Supreme Court retention election. I also received the support of many other organizations, including 17 union locals and councils, 14 Democratic Legislative Districts, and multiple tribes, pro-choice groups, and other organizations.

What other organizations are you planning to ask for an endorsement?

I plan to ask all these groups for their support again, as well as other groups, including additional Democratic Legislative Districts and county organizations.

Part III – Legal experience, technology, and court costs

Please describe your pro bono activities over the last five years.

As a judge, I can't represent clients, but I participate in the Northwest Minority Job Fair, and serve as Board member for the Washington Leadership Institute, an organization that aims to develop legal professionals and community leaders who reflect the diversity of Washington State. I also teach civics and serve as Chair of the Interpreter Commission.

What law firms or public law offices (i.e. King County Prosecutor's Office) have you worked for? Have you served as a prosecutor or a public defender? Please include dates, and title for each position that you have held, as well as areas of law practiced.

I began my legal career practicing international business law at Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson in Seattle in 1991. After 5 years and my student loans paid off, I moved to the Seattle City Attorney's Office, where I worked in the Domestic Violence Unit from 1996 to 1997. Next, I was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Western District of Washington from 1997 to 2002.

Have you ever served as a mediator or arbitrator? (If so, please describe your experiences.)

Before I became a Judge, I served as a discovery master and mediator. I performed settlement conferences when I was a trial judge for 10 years. I can't do that work now as a Supreme Court Justice.

What do you believe are the most important qualifications for a judge or justice?

A judge needs courage, integrity, compassion and a good work ethic. My experiences as a lawyer and in life - especially my years as a trial court judge, as a prosecutor in federal and local courts, and as a business attorney - make me particularly qualified to understand the range of issues in front of the Supreme Court.

Have you been a judge pro-tem? If so, what was that experience like? What did you learn from it? Have you completed the pro-tem training in King County? For which judges do you regularly pro-tem?

No.

Do you support making it easier for Washingtonians who are not members of the bar to access public records, particularly at the Superior/District court levels, where per-page fees are charged?

Yes.

Do you have any thoughts on how our courts should address the growing use of smartphones during court proceedings, particularly by jurors?

Jurors should not have phones during proceedings.

Is Washington relying too much on court fees to cover the cost of operating our judicial system? How do you believe our courts should be funded?

Yes. Our courts should be funded by the general fund. Justice is a responsibility we all share.

Part IV – Access to justice

If elected, how will you work to improve access to justice, particularly for communities and constituencies that do not understand the American legal system?

As a past Chair of the WA State Access to Justice Board and a board member for many years, I am passionate about ensuring justice for ALL Washingtonians. We could do a great deal more to improve access to justice by simplifying forms and writing them in plain and common language, reducing or eliminating user fees, ensuring that interpreters are available when needed and improving our openness as a coequal branch of government.

What does the phrase *Black Lives Matter* mean to you as a judicial candidate?

We have a long way to go to keep the promise of this nation that we are all equal before the law. All of us have an obligation to eliminate bias because Black Lives Matter and our jurisprudence must show it.

What do you see are the legal issues in the #timesup and #metoo movements?

These movements underscore the barriers that women and minorities face. We need transparency in government regarding how complaints are investigated and resolved. We need legal incentives to change the culture that accepts bad conduct. A risk management approach on a case by case basis is not the answer. There is much work still to do. We would do well to implement the recommendations that are being made by the Gender and Justice Commission and the Minority and Justice Commission. I am honored to serve on a court that is currently super-majority female. I have always supported women, including women of color and LGBTQ candidates, for judicial appointment and election and was just recognized for this work by the Center for Women and Democracy.

What ideas can you offer to make our judicial system more open, transparent, and responsive?

We need to ensure that user fees do not keep our least disadvantaged from accessing the courts. We need to issue our opinions faster. Finally, we could better utilize technology and allow electronic filing of forms. I am pleased with the strides we made already, but there is much work still to do.

I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.

Signature

Steve Gonzalez

Date: 3/7/18

Printed Name

Steve Gonzalez