

King County Democrats 2023 Endorsement Questionnaire

Name

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Sam Cho

Candidate pronouns

HE/HIM/HIS

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Campaign Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/samforport>

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Twitter

<https://www.twitter.com/samchotweets>

Link to candidate headshot

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_2xCqgXnJUnABysQTI-JboMAtdZkurL/view?usp=sharing

Other URL 1

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fon9BV92IISRzmAQ-3X_eZAIrwulAYK3/view?usp=sharing

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What type of position are you running for?

Port

What position are you running for?

Port of Seattle

Are you a Democrat?

Yes

Have you ever been a member of another political party?

No

Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission, or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?

No

Do you have a code of conduct for campaign staff and volunteers?

No

If you have campaign staff, do you support them joining a labor union?

Yes

Do you support employees of your jurisdiction (e.g. your city's employees, the Port's employees, etc.) exercising their collective bargaining rights without fear of retaliation, including the right to bargain and strike for better working conditions and pay?

Yes

Are you willing to have yourself, your staff, and your peers undergo training to understand and combat institutional racism, implicit bias, and sexual harassment?

Yes

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate fossil fuel PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate pharmaceutical PACs or corporate health insurance PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate building industry PACs, including the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW) and the National Association of Home Builders?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from law enforcement or sheriffs' organizations?

No

Will you return contributions from companies or PACs who are aligned with the organizations listed above and others that conflict with Democratic Party values?

Yes

Have you made any donations to Republican candidates or Republican Party organizations in the last 5 years?

No

Have you previously participated, or will you be participating, in a candidate training program like Institute for a Democratic Future or Emerge?

Yes

Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and political activity).

I am the incumbent for Position 2 of the Port of Seattle Commission. This year, I became the President of the Port Commission, becoming the first person of color and youngest Commission President in the Port's 111 year history. Prior to running for the Port Commission, I was a Legislative Assistant to a member of Congress and State Senator, a political

appointee in the Obama Administration, and an entrepreneur who founded a company in the international trade and export space. Although I've never been a member of a union, I am a strong supporter of organized labor. I have already secured the endorsement of several labor unions for my re-election. I serve on several boards in the community including the Korean American Coalition of Washington where I am currently the Board President. I graduated from American University in Washington DC for my undergraduate degree and The London School of Economics with my master's of science.

What motivated you to run for this position and how would you evaluate your success?

I first ran for this position in 2019 when my predecessor Courtney Gregoire decided to retire. I believed at the time, that I had the best credentials and experience to become an effective port commissioner. I worked on trade policy for a member of Congress in Washington DC and I founded an international export company. This gave me intimate knowledge of ports and their operations. I also served as a Legislative Assistant to State Senator Bob Hasegawa which gave me experience and knowledge in local and state policy issues. I believed at the time, the sum of these experiences made me the strongest candidate and the voters agreed when I defeated the former Mayor of Bellevue by a margin of 20%.

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, I believe I had a very successful first term. We weathered this once in a generation pandemic without laying off any port employees and without a single small/minority business failure. We also made strong progress in sustainability. We hit our goal of halving emissions by 50% at the airport 9 years early thanks to the decision to begin purchasing renewable natural gas. We've also successfully installed shore power (cold ironing) for container vessels at Terminal 5 of the Seattle harbor. And last November, I was in Sharm-el Sheikh, Egypt to announce a "Green Shipping Corridor" between Busan, South Korea and our gateway.

Four years ago, I ran on a platform that included tackling human trafficking. I'm very to say that the Port of Seattle was the recipient of the 2023 US Department of Transportation's Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Award. Lastly, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport was upgraded from 3 star to a 4 star airport and won "Best Airport In North America" award by Skytrax 2 years in a row in 2022 and 2023.

What are the top three issues of urgency that you will address if elected?

1. We are entering a period of economic uncertainty. Interest rates continue to rise and inflation continues to be high. On top of that, we are seeing instability in the banking sector and cratering container volumes. My first priority would be continue to provide economic stimulus to the region by creating jobs. The port currently has a \$5.3 billion capital projects budget for the next 5 years. This will create thousands of family wage and business opportunities. This includes a focus on workforce development as we are seeing a wave of retirements in both the maritime and aviation sectors and not enough of a pipeline to backfill these jobs.
2. We must continue to push our agenda to become the greenest port in North America. We have become a regional leader in these efforts over the last 4 years. However, we must become a global leader in the next four. We are doing this by engaging international partners all over the world to find ways to accelerate reaching our goal of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2040.
3. While people may not consider combating human trafficking as a priority, many fail to realize that human trafficking got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud of the progress we've made as a port to tackle trafficking. However, there's still so much more we can do to stem this form of manipulation.

How will you involve all residents and engage all communities in the decision-making process?

I have always been a supporter of community-based policy. I have worked in my first term to establish feedback loops between communities and the port. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I led the effort for the port to host listening sessions across port stakeholders to learn how the port could help in the pandemic recovery. This resulted in over 12 listening sessions with over 100 stakeholders. In addition, in my first year at the commission, I passed a motion on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion that established a Community Advisory Council that allowed community members to provide input to the port's work on EDI. We will continue to make these efforts in community engagement into my 2nd term.

How have you promoted an enduring environment of inclusivity, diversity, and equity?

In my first year, I introduced and passed a motion on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Among other things, the motion required unconscious bias training for all port staff, established an internal change team and an external community advisory board for all our EDI efforts. It also commissioned a study on institutional racism at the Port.

Last year, I funded a study on barriers to entry for small minority businesses at the port and just last month we passed a motion on language access at the port.

If elected, how will you address inequalities experienced among BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or other marginalized communities and advance an agenda of equality?

As an economic development agency that touches everyone's lives in the Puget Sound region, we must ensure that a rising tide is lifting all boats. The Port has really ramped up its efforts in equity, diversity, and inclusion to include communities such as the BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other marginalized communities. One thing we hope to do at the airport is build out gender neutral bathrooms and include members of these communities in all our community advisory groups.

Should the Port promote dockside/rail connection to minimize truck traffic congestion and diesel emissions?

Yes

Should the Port make "Cold Iron" electrical power required of shippers, including cruise ships, to minimize diesel generator exhaust air pollution?

Yes

Do you support allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's ports?

No

Do you support the collective bargaining efforts of SeaTac Airport workers for better pay and better working conditions?

Yes

Will you be an advocate for alternative methods of transportation including electric rail and high speed, electric, interstate rail?

Yes

As the Port recovers from the economic impact of the pandemic, how will you use your position to ensure that future growth and activity among tenant operations minimize climate impact and practice environmental stewardship?

The Port of Seattle has passed the largest capital budget package in its history. We have spending \$5.3 billion over the next 5 years to improve our port. It is incumbent on us as commissioner to ensure that these funds are spent in an equitable manner and that it has the furthest impact possible as we recover from the pandemic. A substantial portion of the investments over the next 5 years will be to ensure that we are the greenest port in North America. These investments will be made in both the maritime and aviation sectors. We must work with our tenants at the airport to steward the port of the future when it comes to the environment.

How will you use your position to elevate Indigenous people and encourage more equity and opportunity for BIPOC Communities? Please offer specific examples of your plans.

The Port of Seattle must respect the history of the tribes in our region. In the last 4 years, we've built a strong working relationship with the tribes. In renaming the Port's parks, we worked closely with port. We are also deeply involved in the cleanup and habitat restoration along the Duwamish waterway. We also have promoted native small businesses by designating a native owned small business kiosk so they can sell native art and other products to travelers.

Airport activity affects the health and socio-economic circumstances of the many people living in nearby neighborhoods. How will you balance the future growth of SeaTac airport with the interests of the residents of airport-adjacent communities?

We must ensure that all the practices at the airport are as environmentally conscious as possible. We must encourage our airline stakeholders to utilize quieter model airplanes and utilize sustainable aviation fuels. We also need to continue to push the FAA to change their regulations on flight paths, DNR boundaries and landing glide slopes.

In addition, the port needs to continue to push for sound mitigation packages to be distributed and installed around the most effective nearby residents. There have been reports of failed packages from previous installations. The Port must also work to find solutions for this as well.

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.

Yes

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