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Your Details

Basic information about yourself

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I am a candidate running for... US House Congressional District #5

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Getting to Know You

This next section will give you the opportunity to provide details about who you are as a person, candidate, and member of the community.

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Terri Cooper and I'm running for Washington State's 5th Congressional District. I am a military transplant arriving with my Air Force Veteran Father to Spokane in 1974, the same year Spokane hosted the World Expo. Spokane was my family's fifth assignment. Being an outdoor enthusiast, I quickly fell in love with the outdoor recreation opportunities and natural beauty of the area. My Father served two tours in Vietnam; I am deeply patriotic. I attended Medical Lake High School and married Ken, my high school sweetheart. I have lived in the city of Medical Lake most of our married life and continuously since 1982. We have been married 44 years and together have three children and eleven grandchildren. Our love for God, our family and our community are the bedrock of who we are.

I am the current Mayor for the City of Medical Lake and have 28 years of governmental experience. I served 25 years as an appointed Court Administrator and seventeen of those years as an appointed Court

Commissioner, passing the Washington State Judicial Officer Exam in 2002. I was appointed by Presiding Judge Gregory Tripp and I presided over criminal and civil cases with full judicial authority.

While working full-time and raising a family I earned my undergraduate degree from EWU Interdisciplinary Studies/Public Administration. I then continued and earned an MBA from WGU. I highly value education and consider myself a life-long learner. My studies in the law, public administration, and business have served me well and have prepared me to be the competent, confident, and capable leader that I am today. I love the rule of law, justice, truth, and the administration of good government that serve the people.

Access to justice is important to me and why I developed probation programs to help those caught in cycles of addiction and violence. My administrative work included policy development, annual budgets, and legislative processes. I understand the doctrine of separation of powers and appreciate the checks and balances foundational in the US Constitution, of which I've taken an oath to uphold, an oath I do not take lightly.

In 2015 when I saw the deterioration of my downtown and apathy among, I formed a community revitalization non-profit to create a sense of community pride and engagement. When the city government resisted partnership, I ran for the mayor's seat and won in a landslide election, defeating an incumbent mayor with over 20 years of city involvement.

The culmination of my education, experience, and community service were put to the test during the unexpected Gray Rd and Oregon Rd fires of 2023 and I emerged a proven leader; leading in countywide resilient recovery efforts and am known for my tenacious work. The need was urgent, and I knew how to engage and acted without hesitation. I know what Eastern Washington needs and I know how to go about fighting for the faith, family, and freedoms we love.

List any relevant experience, leadership, or service.

Court Administration is a leadership position responsible for all the non-judicial functions of the court. In my 25 years of Court Administration along with my degree in Public Administration and Master's in Business. I understand the critical importance of the separation of powers, budgets drafting and accountable spending, data analysis and performance standards, along with auditing and accounting principles with transparency. I am trained and knowledgeable in system and program analysis and have led organizational change. I am Effective communicator with strong writing skills. Experienced budget and

grant manager. Rarely will you find an elected official with an understanding of how decisions must be compatible with internal operations and external deliverables. I am that rare breed.

Eastern Washington Court Managers Group. I am the founding member leading efforts for court education and mentoring for counties in Eastern Washington. Because post legislative or case law decisions were made and disseminated in Olympia, Eastern Washington was left out so I took it upon myself to form this group. We met at regular intervals to dialogue about new rules, laws, changes, best practices, policies, and procedures. I received a Washington State award for my efforts some years later.

25 years' leadership experience developing and implementing restorative justice programs, innovating probation services, and community partnerships. I became a leader and resource for probation services throughout the region and state because my innovative programs resulted in 85% success rates. I received a state award for my work. I then founded and sought grant funding to start a full funded Therapeutic Court which was realized in 2020 and thriving today.

Youth Court. I founded the Cheney Youth Court in 2007 for the purpose of student civic education. I taught a law program at Cheney High School. I am a founding member of the Washington State Association of Youth Courts (WSAYC). Students heard real court cases and made legal findings. Under my tutelage students were mentored in roles of court officers becoming judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, clerk, and advocate for their peers with traffic infractions. We annually traveled to Seattle University School of Law to meet with other Washington Youth Courts and once led a team of students to successfully change an existing state law.

Judicial Officer. I became a leader in the West Plains region of Spokane County because of my thorough understanding of the law, its application, and deliverables. Judges, lawyers, public defenders, and probation officers from around the region and state often consulted with me on legal matters, court administration, and probation services. Cheney Municipal Court became the training ground for many young lawyers.

Community Engagement

Re*Imagine Medical Lake: 2015 Founder, Vice President, Fundraising, Festival Director, Secretary/Treasurer (past)

2019 Vietnam Veterans Traveling Wall to Medical Lake. Worked with veterans and community members for 18 months, recruited more than 100 volunteers, worked with Team Fairchild and Pentagon hosting three honors ceremonies which included all five branches of the military and a flyover. One of the highlights of my life experiences. I am a patriot.

Describe your duty to the office you are running for and how you will achieve success.

My first duty is to serve selflessly and compassionately in a way that represents the values and morals of Eastern Washington. My duty is to understand the issues and research matters in such a way that I am fully informed, understand the impacts of current and new legislation on the fine people of Eastern Washington and to be their voice in Congress.

What difference can one in 435 voices make? I won't know for certain until I get there, but I am not one to sit silently or go along to get along. I am a peacemaker which is not a peacekeeper. Peacemakers are not afraid of the chaos that can follow a hardline decision for the sake of long-term peace. Peacemakers know how to use truth and logic to appeal to others for consensus.

I will achieve success by being engaged, knowledgeable of subject matter. I will be ready at all times to draft legislation that turns the tide of the status quo, calls for a balanced budget, calls for the closure of our borders, calls for the removal of illegal immigrants, calls for the protection of the unborn, calls for energy independence, calls for accountability among the elite for criminal activity, calls for the end of censorship through the media, calls for free speech, calls for the control and accountability of bigtech and social media giants, and calls for breakup of monopolies, and the power of impeachment when necessary. I particularly look forward to the power of subpoena to call bad actors onto the world stage for questioning to reveal their guilt or innocence, and pass legislation to limit the power of bad actors. I look forward to using my legal experience to conduct business and inquiries in a manner that is professional,

thorough, and complete.

What does success look like for this position and what key performance indicators should voters use to evaluate you?

As your Congresswoman success will be measurable and intangibles clearly seen. Success is being available, hearing concerns of the people of Eastern Washington, and finding solutions to those problems. Success means I take the time to research and understand the inner workings of systems, agencies, and social problems and look for solutions. Success means I'm able to not only understand the problem but able to articulate the problem and offer solutions by rallying others around the truth of the problem and able to find best outcomes. Success means I am not content to give pat answers but am willing to roll up my sleeves and do the hard work and put in the long hours. Success means I don't put myself before others. Success means I don't forget my family along the way. Success means I don't forget God along the way and that I keep my life in balance, God, Family, Work. Success means I take care of myself so I am able to help others but mostly I find joy in service to others so it doesn't take much to recharge my batteries.

People will be able to gauge my performance by my voting record, my visible connection and availability to community, and the solutions based results which have been the hallmark of my leadership. I am a truth teller and do not suffer fools lightly. I will soon be known as a no-nonsense person with proven ability as a change agent in the House of Representatives.

What community activities are you engaged in? Have you held leadership roles in any of these organizations?

Re*Imagine Medical Lake, 501C3, Founding Member, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Festival Director from 2015 through January 2021. This organization was established for the purpose of community revitalization which includes tourism, economic development, education, environmental preservation, beautification, and small business support. I was instrumental in the visioning and formation of this organization. I was intimately involved in establishing the organizational structure, policies, procedures, compliance, and tax reporting responsibilities. As the Festival Director I created seasonal events, engaged sponsors, created marketing materials, developed website content, promotional materials, and advertising. Re*Imagine Medical Lake became the cornerstone non-profit in the community and the hub of resources and connectivity for all other non-profits, the school district, and the local government, and continues to thrive in that role.

Spokane Region Long Term Recovery Group (SRLTRG), 501C3. Founder, President (current). When the wildfires of August 18, 2023, roared through the City of Medical Lake and a second fire started within hours in the Elk area I reached out through the county and state emergency management agencies to seek recovery assistance. I learned from others who were knowledgeable and experienced in community post-fire recovery work and set about forming a local 501C3 for such a purpose. I solicited long-standing business and non-profit leaders to fill board positions from Spokane, Medical Lake, and Elk. I sought funding from community fundraising events and non-profits and worked with state and county emergency management for distribution of government funding through case managers and government contracts. I've acted as the Executive Director until March 28, 2024. I still serve as the president and the board has contracted for legal, treasurer, and secretarial positions. Under my leadership this organization is poised for success and has a sustainable model so they can finish the post-fire work and stand ready for any future disaster.

Government Assistance. August 19, 2023 I led the post-wildfire recovery effort taking responsibility for the entire county. I led the effort to receive unprecedented Governor's emergency Individual Assistance in the amount of \$5.6 million and similarly unprecedented FEMA Primary Individual Assistance without limits, caps only applying to max awards per individual and included low interest mortgage and business loans. I continued to reach out to Governor Inslee, my congressional representatives: Cathy McMorris Rogers, Patti Murray, and Maria Cantwell, and called President Biden myself on more than a few occasions. Both the Governors award and FEMA award were the first of their kind. When I set out to solve a problem I am committed to the long hours and determination needed to get results.

Post Fire Recovery and Community Debris Clean-up. I recruited leaders and volunteers by the hundreds to

remove tens of thousands of burned and hazardous trees at no expense to the homeowners. I took the initiative to contact Spokane Health and Spokane Clean Air and received another \$200,000 which paid for all asbestos testing among other things. I don't sit around and wait for others, I am a problem solver.

Your Political Beliefs

This section contains a series of questions about your alignment concerning broad governmental philosophies as well as some specific issues.

Where do our rights as citizens of the United States come from? Under what conditions can government infringe or suspend them?

Our rights come from the great Creator, God, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, precursor to the Constitution of the United States. As a citizen of the United States our rights are spelled out in the Bill of Rights, the first ten Amendments to the Constitution.

Citizens can lose some of their liberties due to criminal activity, such as the right to vote, right to bear arms, right to be in certain places or engage with certain people. This is allowed because bad actors must be punished in an effort to be a lesson to promote moral and just behavior among our citizenry, deter criminal behavior, and in an effort to rehabilitate offenders. When an offender has been rehabilitated, their rights should be restored in so far as they are not a threat to this country or other citizens.

Do you consider yourself a constitutional originalist or do you prescribe to it as a living document? Please explain.

I am firmly a constitutional originalist. I believe the United States Constitution was divinely inspired and while certainly not to be worshipped is the greatest constitution ever written. The great American experiment and its constitutional freedoms have brought the United States to a place of first-class world power, dominance, global leadership, unmatched prosperity and leader in technology and ingenuity. The strength of our constitution is found in its three separate and equal branches of government designed for checks and balances. When the government operates within the constraints of the original design, we prosper, when branches like the executive overreach and control the power of the purse which belongs to the legislature, there's trouble. When the executive attempts to control judicial systems and outcomes, there is trouble. I oppose the "living document" approach in all its forms. I do agree with Amendments ONLY when they are created to clarify an already established doctrine of the original, for example, the 13th Amendment which aligns with all men being created equal as stated in the Declaration of Independence, prelude to the Constitution. It took civil war to affirm that right.

What is the purpose of government? If elected, how will you perform your duties based on that "purpose?"

The purpose of government is clearly stated in the Preamble to the Constitution and the duties therein are both a mandate and mission.

The government is to focus all its efforts on forming a more perfect union. We must strive to be more perfect than we are at every juncture. Justice is first and foremost when the governed agree to a set rule of law, obedience to that law, and swift punishment for disobedience to the law. Justice must protect the rights of individuals, assume innocence, and provide for proper legal defense for the indigent.

Secondly the government is obligated to insure domestic Tranquility within our borders or established domains. The government is mandated to make every effort to ensure the peace and safety of its citizens from all threats domestic and foreign and to neutralize those threats. Threats are anything that infringes on the rights of individuals including religious, right to bear arms, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, and the right to be free in our lives, our liberties, and our personal pursuits if they do not infringe on the rights and freedom of others. Every person has a right to live in tranquility.

The government is mandated to provide for common defense. The government of the United States has duty to fully fund, train, and support military personnel to ensure they are equipped to secure our borders and act abroad when necessary to provide for the defense of our freedoms. The government has duty to provide support for military personnel at the highest level of compensation, pensions, and lifetime medical

benefits because they have volunteered to defend our freedom. Greater love has no man than this than he lay down his life for a friend.

Government must promote the general welfare. The government has a duty to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason. General welfare includes those everyday things that impact our lives. Some of those things include having a balanced federal budget to control inflation, relying on free market to control pricing, being independent from all foreign aid and markets, and being transparent and ensuring the power remains with the people. The government should protect our economy from foreign actors that take our jobs, technology, intellectual property, buy or control properties within our domestic borders, or allow any control that would threaten the general well-being of our citizens.

Government had a duty to secure God's blessings upon this nation. God is the blesser, not government. The government must protect and promote the individual right to freely worship God as one sees fit and to promote tolerance, peace, and love among its citizens as we bear with one another in love. To secure blessings from God the government itself must look to God for wisdom and guidance and repent for known wrongs. A just and fair government whose God is the Lord will find blessing resulting in continual blessing to future generations.

When does life begin and at what point does the government have a duty to protect it?

Life begins at conception. The government has a duty to protect the unborn with the same due diligence it protects all human life. It is unconstitutional for the government to engage in pro-choice agendas that promote the willful termination of pregnancies and take the lives of the most vulnerable human life, the defenseless unborn.

Do you have any criminal convictions, ever filed for bankruptcy, have any active or unresolved tax liens, any conflicts of interest that may jeopardize your candidacy?

I have never been charged with or convicted of a crime. I have never filed for bankruptcy. I have never had a tax lien nor do I have any unresolved tax liens. My only conflict of interest is I am the current Mayor of the City of Medical Lake which if elected would be incompatible. When I am elected for Congress, I will resign my Mayoral position.

Describe how you will make yourself available to your constituents and vote as their representative, adhering to the values and answers you've provided in this questionnaire.

The constituents of Eastern Washington are the very reason I'm running for this office. I've worked extensively in all twelve counties during my career in criminal justice. I understand the vast rural areas of Eastern Washington and challenges they face because of their remote locations including lack of internet services, lack of sufficient police, fire, ambulance, hospitals, and sufficient medical support. Eastern Washington and its tribes are the most underrepresented part of Washington State. The needs and interests of Eastern Washington are largely ignored by state agencies except for overregulation and taking of our land and freedoms, then we are remembered, I will oppose those efforts.

The way I plan to stay connected to my constituents is easy and I've thought about it often. I plan to continue living in Eastern Washington to be with family when I am out of session and will also have housing in DC.

I plan to hire professional and experienced staff to stay on top of all committee work and progress and to help me stay connected to the communities of Eastern Washington.

While I am in Washington DC I plan to have regular video, email, text messaging, twitter, Instagram and Facebook posts which provide real time updates about committee agendas, progress, and decisions that impact Eastern Washington. I plan to make staff available for phone and email concerns and can schedule video calls and meetings when needed.

When I am home in Eastern Washington, I plan to hold scheduled and regular visits with state, county, and local elected officials to stay informed about local and state issues in which I may be able to help. I plan to regularly travel to the twelve counties of Eastern Washington and host meetings and Q&A sessions to hear from the people about their concerns and explain what is happening in DC.

Above all else I plan to be a person of integrity, honesty, and transparency in all my communications. It is my utmost intent to remember every day that I represent the people and to steer clear of compromise or personal agendas. I plan to own my decisions and be able to articulate why and how I draw conclusions and vote in any given manner. Mostly I am excited to represent Eastern Washington and can hardly wait to state "Eastern Washington Votes... yea or nay" on any given matter. I plan to be the voice of Eastern Washington.

Please provide any feedback, comments, or questions that you have for the SCRCC.

None at this time.

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