

King County Democrats 2026 Endorsement Questionnaire

Candidate name

Toshiko Hasegawa

Candidate pronouns

she/her

PDC Filer_name

Friends of Toshiko Hasegawa

Campaign phone

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Number we can text or call if we have questions about this form

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Campaign email

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Campaign website

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Facebook

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

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/toshiko-grace-hasegawa-a3122049>

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/t_o_s_h_i_k_o/

Link to candidate headshot

<https://www.votetoshiko.com/about>

Other campaign link

<https://www.tiktok.com/@toshikograce>

Campaign manager name

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Consultant name

Michael Charles

Consultant email

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Jurisdiction of office sought

County

Specific office

County Council District 2

Are you a Democrat?

Yes

Have you ever been a member of another political party?

No

Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers?

Yes

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

I am a fourth-generation South Seattle resident with a bachelor's and master's degree in criminal justice, and my career has focused on building systems that are more accountable and responsive to the people they serve.

I began my career working for King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles, interfacing with the Law and Justice Committee, and was later hired by all nine councilmembers to work in the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight, helping build accountability into our public safety systems. I also served on the Washington State Joint Legislative Task Force on Deadly Force, advancing reforms at the state level.

I served in Governor Inslee's cabinet as Executive Director of the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, where I worked to make state government more inclusive and responsive to underrepresented communities. Today, I serve as a Port of Seattle Commissioner, overseeing major infrastructure investments and advancing equitable economic development.

I was raised in a union household—my mom is a union healthcare worker—and that has shaped my commitment to labor. I have also been active in Democratic Party organizing as a PCO and executive board member.

What motivated you to run for this position and what essential skills will you bring to the role?

I am running because the cost of living is pushing people out of the communities they helped build, and local government is not moving with the urgency this moment demands. I grew up in South Seattle and have seen rising housing costs, unaffordable childcare, and strained public systems squeeze working families out of their neighborhoods. King County has the power and responsibility to intervene at scale.

I bring executive leadership, policy implementation, and systems-level problem solving. As a Port of Seattle Commissioner, I oversee major infrastructure investments and regional strategy, managing complex budgets and delivering projects that impact thousands of people.

My experience inside King County government gave me a clear understanding of how policy moves from concept to implementation. Through my work with the Law and Justice Committee and the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight, I developed skills in legislative analysis, cross-department coordination, and accountability systems, ensuring policies are executed effectively. At the state level, I led an agency in Governor Inslee's cabinet, managing operations, building cross-sector partnerships, and advancing policy.

A key partner funded by the county is the King County Regional Homelessness Authority. Since its inception in 2021, the organization has been led by 5 different executives and county leaders continue to express dissatisfaction. What actions would you recommend for the future of this organization?

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority was created with the right goal, regional coordination, but it has not delivered the stability or results our unhoused neighbors deserve. Five executive directors in four years is a structural failure.

I support the County's move to restructure the Authority with clearer lines of accountability and genuine County oversight. That means fully implementing the corrective actions from the forensic audit, on governance, contracting, and financial controls, and addressing administrative funding shortfalls so the organization can function without cutting services.

I support establishing a clear performance framework with defined metrics: housing placements, time to placement, and long-term housing stability. The Council must be empowered to evaluate whether to continue, amend, or end its participation based on results and outcomes.

But accountability cannot come at the cost of continuity. Whatever structural changes we make, we must protect service providers and ensure people currently experiencing homelessness do not fall through the cracks during any transition. I plan to be part of solving this crisis.

Traffic safety has surpassed property crime as a top issue in surveys of county residents. What actions do you support to reduce traffic safety concerns?

Traffic safety is a public safety crisis, and we must treat it with the same urgency as any threat to community wellbeing. In South Seattle, Rainier Ave S is one of the most dangerous corridors in Washington State, with some of the highest rates of serious injuries and fatalities. I support measures to slow traffic, including dedicated bus lanes and protected bike lanes, which help reduce speeds and improve safety. Converting Route 7 to RapidRide will also get more people out of cars and onto transit. These are proven Vision Zero strategies and should be prioritized in historically underinvested communities.

On MLK Jr. Way S., at-grade light rail crossings have led to repeated, preventable tragedies. We must invest in safer crossings, improved signaling, and infrastructure that reduces conflicts between trains, vehicles, and pedestrians, while advocating for long-term grade separation. Advancing Graham Street Station is also critical. Bringing transit closer to where people live reduces dangerous crossings and supports transit-oriented development in one of the most transit-dependent areas of the city.

Safety is about design, equity, and political will, and I will bring all three.

In 2025, the Council approved a Safe and Stable Communities Sales Tax to protect public safety and preserve essential services amid budget challenges. What other new taxes do you support to offset budget shortfalls for the county if cuts from the federal government continue?

Washington has one of the most regressive tax codes in the nation, and King County is not immune. Too many existing tools, including levies, fall disproportionately on working families. We need to be honest about that while we work to change it.

Where we do use regressive tools, I will ensure every dollar goes toward urgent priorities. Public safety, housing stability, childcare affordability, and behavioral health are interconnected and cannot take a hit.

At the County level, I will explore high-earner excise taxes where legally permissible and support establishing a Public Development Authority to finance housing, childcare, and electrification infrastructure. A PDA is also a step toward a public bank, keeping public dollars invested locally instead of on Wall Street. I will also fight for participatory budgeting so communities most impacted by cuts have a real voice in how resources are spent.

At the state level, I will continue pushing for more progressive tools. I advocated for HB 2442

and lifting the 1% property tax cap remains critical. We cannot keep rolling back progress, including attempts to weaken the estate tax.

As part of its public safety mandate, the council is responsible for preparing for and mitigating risks from natural disasters and other hazards through its 2025-2030 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. What are your top three priorities highlighted within the plan and how would you show support for them?

My top three priorities are seismic resilience, climate and flood mitigation, and equitable investment in the communities most at risk. I served on the legislative disaster resiliency work group and understand the seismic threats facing our region. We must accelerate retrofits of critical infrastructure, including hospitals, wastewater and energy systems, and ensure all new infrastructure, including housing and childcare facilities, is built to modern seismic standards. These investments are essential to maintaining continuity of operations and minimizing loss of life.

Climate-driven hazards like flooding, extreme heat, and wildfire smoke disproportionately impact low-income communities and frontline workers. I support investments in stormwater systems, green infrastructure, and neighborhood resilience hubs that strengthen communities before disasters occur.

With FEMA scaling back proactive programs like BRIC, local governments must step up. King County should establish dedicated mitigation funding that prioritizes low-income and BIPOC communities.

Resiliency is more cost-effective than recovery. Every dollar invested in hazard mitigation saves about \$6 in future disaster costs.

Historically, King County has led in services for survivors of gender-based violence including trans survivors. Its new budget allocates nearly \$2 million for sexual assault and domestic violence services. What additional actions would you take to support survivors?

King County's investment in sexual assault and domestic violence services is a foundation, but it cannot be the ceiling. I will build on it by connecting survivor safety to housing, behavioral health, and systemic accountability.

For many survivors, especially trans survivors, the most immediate need is a safe place to go. Housing stability is survivor safety. I support a housing levy and setting aside funds for emergency beds for women and children. My housing platform also includes a civic hotel model for families, which is directly connected to survivor safety.

I will expand access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed services designed for LGBTQ+ & immigrant survivors, and those who have been failed by traditional systems.

My background in criminal legal reform also shapes this work. Survivors need real options: legal advocacy, protection from retaliation, and systems that are accountable, alongside community-based alternatives where appropriate. I also support directing seized assets into survivor services to fund recovery and stabilization.

Supporting survivors means building systems where people can get safe, stay housed, access care, and rebuild their lives with dignity

In 2025, Council passed a \$20 billion budget for the 2026-2027 biennium. About 17% of the budget makes up the general fund and is flexible to fund local priorities like public health, public safety and elections. How do your priorities align with the designated general fund spending over the next two years?

The GF reflects our values, and right now too much is spent managing crises that better upstream investment could prevent. KC spends a significant share of flexible dollars on the criminal legal system. As the candidate with the deepest experience working inside that system, I know where funds are effective and where they are not. I will ask hard questions and push to rebalance spending toward evidence-based, preventative solutions.

That means investing earlier in housing stability, behavioral health infrastructure, diversion programs, early learning, after-school programs, and workforce development. Every dollar

spent connecting people to housing, care, and opportunity reduces reliance on costly downstream responses like incarceration.

I support funding mental health services, expanding pre-filing/trial diversion programs, and investing in housing at scale so people have the stability to thrive. Public health should be treated as core infrastructure.

I also support continued investment in safety net services, with a focus on outcomes, coordination, and accountability.

My goal is to align GF spending with a proactive model that addresses root causes and reduces long-term costs.

Attestation

- The candidate hereby attests that, to the best of their knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.

Created on May 8th, 2026.