

# King County Democrats 2026 Endorsement Questionnaire

**Candidate name**

Gabriel Rothstein

**Candidate pronouns**

He/Him

**PDC Filer\_name**

Elect Gabriel Rothstein for Judge

**Campaign phone**

201 877 1869

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

Yes

**Campaign email**

[Gabrielrothstein1975@yahoo.com](mailto:Gabrielrothstein1975@yahoo.com)

**Campaign website**

<https://www.gabeforjudge.com/>

**Campaign manager name**

Jake Simpson

**Campaign manager email**

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**Campaign manager phone**

206 779 7719

**Jurisdiction of office sought**

Municipal Court

**Specific office**

Seattle Municipal Court, Judge Pos. 5

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

No

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

I've been an advocate for poor and underserved people in my career for over 20 years. Before that I volunteered at clinics that served people in crisis. In high school I was an EMT on my town's volunteer ambulance squad. Public Service has always been important to me. I attended college at Emory University and received my law degree from UCLA Law. I have been a public defender since 2005 working in multiple departments in the office including supervising attorneys, serving as the drug treatment court attorney, working in juvenile court as well as district and superior court. I have tried over 70 cases to verdict in superior court and courts of

limited jurisdiction. I am the Chair of the WSBA Character and Fitness Board and I'm on the Board of Directors of an in-patient substance abuse treatment facility. I also take calls for the Youth Access to Counsel Line (YAC) and I am a volunteer rater for YMCA Mock Trial.

**Please tell us about your proudest accomplishment either through your civic, public and/or community involvement?**

Am I proud of winning tough trials? Absolutely. But Proudest moment has to simply be advocating and fighting for people who never had anyone fight for them before. You can see it in their eyes and in their demeanor that it means a lot to them. This was particularly pronounced in juvenile court. Many of my clients were living on the streets and or coming from unstable environments. It was important to me that they could see that they and their lives matter to my colleagues and I. That and watching people graduate from drug treatment court. The transformation of so many people from street addict to .....living a stable life with a job, home, car, reuniting with family. Nothing short of a sight to behold. Treatment Court graduations were a highlight of my years of practice.

**What injustices have you perceived, either within or outside the courtroom, and what was your response to those events?**

This is a complex question. Injustices take many forms. For so many of my clients one can say it's resources, which without a doubt is an issue. But it goes so much deeper than that. For many people it's about being born into a system of poverty and inequality. It's much tougher to do well at the early stages if you don't have structure and stability in the home. Far too many of my clients grew up in chaotic environments – where survival and making it through the day or week or month was far more important than say acing a test or getting good grades. If your norm is a parent in prison and another with an addiction, life will be more challenging for you. I chose to work in the public interest because I wanted to fight against the inequality that saw in an unjust system.

**What will you do to restore faith in the integrity of the justice system?**

I think it starts with treating everyone with dignity and respect. Everyone. Not just people who can afford lawyers, but everyone who appears in court or is connected to it. This includes pro se litigants, it includes victims of crimes, it includes all people who come before the court. Judges need to meet people where they are and respect that everyone has their lived experiences and they are bringing them with them. I hope to be patient, compassionate, yet also decisive, because that's what people need and want in a jurist.

**In cases involving “malicious harassment” or hate crimes, what are some of the issues in balancing free speech rights against the need to control offensive activity?**

As a fan of US Supreme Court Jurisprudence I have some respect for the hardline the free speech position. “Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech” is very clear, to some it simply means exactly what it says, “make no law means make no law.” To someone like Justice Black it was just that simple. And then you have you Justice Stewart and the “I know it when I see it” approach. At the same time, we want to protect those in our community who are more vulnerable or who have been victims of historical discrimination and/or abuse. Is it fair to punish someone for their thoughts? Well, yes, if those thoughts also involve actions that violate the law. I think courts need to be skeptical and protective of laws that can infringe on free speech, but that must be balance against the need to protect more vulnerable communities.

**New technologies like AI and advances in practice are continually changing. How would you approach cases involving novel legal issues or emerging technologies?**

I think we need to both embrace new technologies but also be careful about what that means. For example, AI can write a legal brief for a lawyer, but it may cite to cases that don't exist and incorporate those cases into the brief. Using video for court appearances is a wonderful advancement, people don't need to take a day or a half day from work to exercise their rights to

challenge a traffic ticket. That kind of advancement is great. The fact that many people using that technology sometimes show a lack of respect because they are on video is a pitfall, but one that does not outweigh the good of the technology. We also need to be on guard for fake videos, AI generated videos as well as spoofed videos and/or phone numbers. Flock Cameras appear to be an area that is rife with danger and false information.

**A 2021 Gender Justice Study of Washington Courts found evidence of many gender inequities. How would you support a criminal justice system that rectifies these historical and systemic inequities?**

I have had the good fortune of having some of the best lawyers in my office as both supervisors and mentors and all but one of them was a woman. Currently my director, assistant director, and my current supervisor are all women and they are a force to be reckoned with. I think any work to rectify systemic inequality must begin with acknowledging that it exists. After that it often comes down to listening to the people who are the subject of inequality and hearing what they see as potential improvements. Sometimes it is as simple as acknowledging that many lawyers are also parents and their schedules simply may not be as flexible in particular in the late afternoon as other people. I think it's important to acknowledge that some people are hesitant to speak up and/or ask for raises or advancement that they are due.

**Attestation**

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

Created on April 30th, 2026.