

3/11/2009

Richard Conlin
People for Richard Conlin
PO Box 22318
Seattle, WA 98122

Dear Richard Conlin,

You are receiving this packet because you are a candidate for Seattle City Council.

Seattle Fire Fighters would like to commend you for seeking elected office. Fire Fighters truly understand the meaning, spirit, and sacrifice of public service and we hold our elected officials in the highest regard for their commitment to the citizens of Seattle.

Seattle Fire Fighters are active participants in the electoral process to maintain and advance the safety, health, and working conditions for Fire Fighters and to ensure that Public Safety is a priority for Seattle.

As the first step of our endorsement process Seattle Fire Fighters invite you to complete the attached questionnaire by March 23rd.

After we have reviewed the completed questionnaire we may contact you to schedule an interview.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire please contact Kenny Stuart, President of Local 27 at (206) 285-1271.

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Seattle Fire Fighters Local 27 PAC
517 – 2nd Ave. W.
Seattle, WA 98119

You can also complete the questionnaire electronically and email to tanyas@iaff27.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kenny Stuart
President, Seattle Fire Fighters Local 27

2009 Seattle City Council
Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

I. Campaign Information

Candidate Name Richard Conlin

Campaign Committee Name People for Richard Conlin

Address PO Box 22318, Seattle WA Zip code 98122

Campaign Phone Number 206-954-2322

Other Phone Number 206-329-0658 (home) 206-684-5335 (office)

Fax Number none

Email Address Conlin2009@gmail.com

Website Address www.richardconlin.com

Campaign Manager Name Sara Nelson

Campaign Manager Phone Number 206-910-8762

II. Seattle Fire Fighter General Campaign Questionnaire

a) Have you ever run for or held an elected office? (please circle one)

Yes

i. If so, did you receive the endorsement of Local 27 or another IAFF affiliate?

Yes

ii. If so, did you receive the endorsement of any labor organizations? If yes, please list.

Yes SEIU 775, SEIU 6, IFPTE 17, ATU 587, IBEW 77, ILWU 19, King County Labor Council, Seattle Police Management, SEIU 925, PSE 1239, IUOE 609, SEIU 1199NW, IUOE 302

b) Have you received the endorsement of any labor organization(s) for your current campaign? If yes, please list.

IFTPE 17

c) Please describe your campaign manager's experience.

Legislative Assistant in my office, 2001-2007

d) Please identify your campaign consultant(s).

Sheila Stickel

e) Do you have a written campaign plan?

Yes

f) What is your campaign fundraising goal?

\$210,000

g) Please briefly describe your campaign budget.

Campaign Manager and Consultant	\$49,000
Voter Contact	\$100,000
Web, Office, Fundraising	\$31,000

Reserve

\$30,000

h) If endorsed by Seattle Fire Fighters how will you utilize a financial contribution from us?

As part of our voter contact work

i) What other endorsements have you received to date?

Other Councilmembers, several hundred community members, Sierra Club

j) What other endorsements do you expect/want to receive?

Unions that endorsed in 2005, King County Conservation Voters, Alki Foundation, Democratic Districts, other environmental and community organizations

k) What role will public safety issues play in your campaign? Please provide details.

Public safety is fundamental to making communities and neighborhoods work. I emphasize it as one of the key issues that is a priority for me. This is particularly important in a time of difficult budget decisions.

III. Seattle Fire Fighter Issues

a) Working on a fire engine places extreme physical demands on members and exposes them to many different hazardous conditions and substances. Seattle Fire Fighters undergo thorough medical examinations prior to being hired to ensure there are no pre-existing medical conditions.

If elected, what will you do to ensure the City of Seattle lives up to its responsibilities for the health and safety of fire fighters?

I am very concerned about injuries to City employees, and have consistently emphasized safety as a primary criterion for measuring the performance of City managers. While the cost savings are important, the more crucial benefit is to the individuals who avoid injury as well as to the morale and efficient operation of the organization as a whole.

b) Fire fighting is a dangerous, labor-intensive, and physically demanding job and fire fighters are typically unable to work beyond their mid-fifties. Furthermore, fire fighters are more susceptible to certain types of cancers.

More than 1/3 of fire fighters hired in Seattle before 1977 have developed cancer. Fire fighters are also 10-100 times as likely as the general public to have a heart attack.

Medicare coverage does not begin until 65. Thus, after many years of dedicated service, most Seattle Fire Fighters must provide their own medical coverage for up to 14 years after retirement creating a significant financial impact at a time when fire fighter's health is at risk.

Additionally, for the purposes of contract negotiations Seattle Fire Fighters are compared with 7 (seven) specific fire departments of like size and composition on the west coast. Of these, Seattle Fire Fighters are the only group that does not currently have any post-retirement medical coverage provided for by their employer or within their pension plan.

If elected, will you support efforts to secure post-retirement medical coverage for fire fighters?

I very much appreciate the problem that you are concerned about, and I am very sympathetic to the situation that firefighters find themselves in. This is a subject for collective bargaining. Within the constraints of that process and the City's currently strained budget, I would certainly be open to this issue.

- c) *Currently fire fighters who suffer catastrophic injuries and are no longer employable by the Seattle Fire Department lose all medical coverage. Local 27 and the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters are working with the Governor and the Legislature to pass legislation that would allow catastrophically injured fire fighters to purchase health insurance from the state.*

Do you support extending the option to purchase health insurance coverage for fire fighters who are disabled due to a line of duty catastrophic injury?

Yes.

- d) *An emergency response to a citizen begins with a call to a fire fighter/dispatcher. This person is responsible to obtain all necessary information from the caller, dispatch the most appropriate resources, and continue to assess, calm, and assist the caller until help arrives. A mistake in call-taking and dispatching can have grave consequences. Once fire fighters are on the scene the dispatcher monitors the radio and assists the fire fighters on the scene. These essential tasks are only effective if the*

dispatcher has fire fighting experience. Lives are saved based on the actions and fire fighting experience of uniformed dispatchers.

If elected will you actively support the continued use of uniformed fire dispatchers in the Seattle Fire Department?

Yes.

- e) *Seattle Fire Fighters have one of the worst pension plans for fire fighters in the entire United States. Seattle Fire Fighters devote much of their lives to the citizens of Seattle. Almost 100% of Seattle Fire Fighters spend their entire professional career here in this job and only leave when they retire. The LEOFF 1 pension plan, which was a much more appropriate plan for fire fighters, was terminated in 1977 and was replaced with the LEOFF 2 pension plan which is sorely lacking. This plan is currently funded by approximately 8% of a fire fighter's salary with fire fighters contributing 50% themselves. The city adds 30% and the state gives 20%.*

Will you support post-retirement benefit improvements for fire fighters?

Adequate pension coverage is very important, and I very much support it. Changes in the LEOFF system would require state action. Insofar as there are opportunities for the City to improve pension coverage, I would be sympathetic to this issue, and again note that specific City actions would have to be within the collective bargaining system and that budget constraints will also have to be considered, especially in the short term.

Will you support maintaining the city's current contribution level to the LEOFF 2 pension plan?

I think that is very appropriate, subject to collective bargaining and the City's financial resources.

- f) *With the economic downturn the demands on the Seattle Fire Department will increase dramatically. As citizens lose health care coverage and home and business maintenance deteriorates, we will see a rise in both medical and fire calls. Emergency services should be strengthened in times like these.*

Will you oppose any reductions to fire department service?

Public safety and human services are my top budget priorities, and I would not support service reductions in either of these areas. Having said that, I also have to be realistic and say that if the recession continues for much longer and the City's financial picture continues to deteriorate, it will be very difficult to sustain even these vital services, and it is likely that all City Departments will have to take some budget cuts. I would ask SFFU for advice on any proposed budget reductions in the Fire Department, and would seek to find ways to prevent such reductions from leading to service reductions.

- g) *The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) sets national standards for the fire service to protect the public and make fire fighters as safe as possible when they do their job.*

Four-person staffing is a result of NFPA 1710. Every fire engine and truck needs at least four fire fighters on it to effectively, and safely get the job done.

Seattle Fire Fighters negotiated four-person staffing for every fire engine and truck in Seattle. They even agreed to work extra shifts to help pay for it because it is so critical to public safety and fire fighter safety.

If elected, will you preserve four-person staffing on every fire engine and fire truck in Seattle?

Yes, I have always supported the 4-person crews. I would oppose any efforts to close fire stations or to shift personnel in ways that would reduce the commitment to provide 4-person crews.

- h) *The Seattle Fire Department is required by Washington State Administrative Code (WAC 296-305-0250; WAC 246-320-165; WAC 296-823-13005; WAC 296-823-17005) to test and maintain records of fire fighters' baseline Tuberculosisⁱ status and Hepatitis Bⁱⁱ immunization status. The Washington State Administrative Code (WAC) refers to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for specific guidelines for TB and Hepatitis B.*

Currently the Seattle Fire Department is not in compliance with this requirement.

The Seattle Fire Department does not have complete records of fire fighters' Tuberculosis immunization status or fire fighters' Hepatitis B immunization status, and we do not know whether or not they developed an effective immune response initially or if they are still protected. In

addition, a percentage of individuals never achieve an immune response to Hepatitis B vaccination and are not protected. These fire fighters need to be identified so that they can be especially cautious and treated aggressively following exposure.

Fire fighters are not being properly protected against Tuberculosis and Hepatitis C. This creates unnecessary risk for fire fighters and their families, decreases public safety, and is in violation of the Washington State Administrative Code and CDC recommendations.

If elected, would you ensure and demand that Seattle Fire Department be in compliance with these and all other state statutes to properly protect fire fighters and their families?

This information is new to me, and is very disturbing. Through my work on the Board of Health, I have become acutely aware of the risks and concerns around Hepatitis and Tuberculosis, and I believe that swift action must be taken to address this issue.

- i) *The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend booster vaccination of First Responders for Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis because individuals' immunity diminishes over time. Since we plan to test members for TB, this would be a valuable opportunity to administer the Tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) booster.*

If elected, would you support booster vaccinations for Seattle Fire Fighters to protect them and their families?

Yes.

- j) **Please describe what you feel are the most pressing public safety issues facing Seattle and how you would address these issues as a member of the Seattle City Council.**
- 1. Maintaining our budget commitment to public safety. I will make this a priority, and would support looking for additional tax resources if necessary to maintain services.**
 - 2. Challenging gang violence and preserving the safety of our neighborhoods. I support integrated human service and police programs to break the culture of support for gang activity, stop gang recruiting, and ensure that those who engage in criminal activity are brought to justice. The Youth Violence Prevention Initiative must be designed with best practices in mind to attain this goal.**
 - 3. Keeping the momentum going on rebuilding our fire stations. With the decline in REET revenues, the building program is at risk. I believe it must be the highest priority for REET**

funding, and that we should seek federal funding through both the stimulus package and other federal budget opportunities that may be possible in the future. I would consider a bond proposal to ensure that construction continues, especially since savings in construction cost contracts may be less than the interest that we would have to pay on the bonds.

- 4. Ensuring the long-term health of the Medic One program. The continued support of the voters cannot be taken for granted, and we must reinforce and emphasize the importance and effectiveness of this program, while continuing strong management oversight.**

- k) Will you meet or respond to Seattle Fire Fighters in a timely manner when we request it due to a concern or question?**

Yes, I am available anytime, and have very much appreciated the opportunity to work with SFFU in the past. I have always strongly supported four-person crews, renovation of the fire facilities, and other priorities of SFFU. I was one of the leaders on the Council in opposition to the closure of the Green Lake Fire Station when the Mayor proposed to do so, and I would oppose any other closures. I look forward to continued work with you in the future.

ⁱ **Tuberculosis (TB)**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by bacteria that usually attacks the lungs. But, TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal. TB disease was once the leading cause of death in the United States.

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria are put into the air when a person with active TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. Fire fighters routinely come into close contact with sick patients at emergency incidents and are exposed to a wide variety of viruses and bacteria, including TB.

In the early 1900s, TB killed one out of every seven people living in the United States and Europe. Starting in the 1940s, scientists discovered the first of several medicines now used to treat TB. As a result, TB slowly began to decrease in the United States. But in the 1970s and early 1980s, the country let its guard down and TB control efforts were neglected. This led to an increase in the number of TB cases between 1985 and 1992. However, with increased funding and attention to the TB problem, there has been a steady decline in the number of persons with TB since 1993.

But TB continues to be a problem. For example, the number of TB cases is still declining, but the speed of decline has slowed since 2003. [Multidrug-resistant TB \(MDR TB\)](#) remains a concern, and [extensively drug-resistant TB \(XDR TB\)](#) has become an important issue. And, racial and ethnic minority populations and foreign-born individuals continue to account for a large number of TB cases in the United States.

ⁱⁱ **Hepatitis B (Hep B)**

Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis B virus. It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. Hepatitis B is usually spread when blood, semen, or another body fluid from a person infected with the hepatitis B virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.

This can happen through sexual contact with an infected person or sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment. Hepatitis B can also be passed from an infected mother to her baby at birth.

Hepatitis B can be either acute or chronic. Acute hepatitis B virus infection is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the hepatitis B virus. Acute infection can — but does not always — lead to chronic infection. Chronic hepatitis B virus infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the hepatitis B virus remains in a person's body. Chronic hepatitis B is a serious disease that can result in long-term health problems, and even death.

The best way to prevent hepatitis B is by getting vaccinated.