

UFCW 21
Candidate Questionnaire - Seattle City Council 2009

Dear Candidate:

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) 21 is the largest private local union in Washington with over 31,000 members working in grocery stores, and retail, health care, and other service sector jobs. We're a diverse union with members in all state legislative districts, and workers with a wide range of incomes and ethnicities. UFCW 21 is a chartered local of UFCW International with 1.4-million workers nationwide, an affiliate of the Change-to-Win national labor federation and we are affiliated with the Washington State Labor Council.

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. We look forward to sharing information about you with our membership. Your answers on this questionnaire will help guide us in that process. **We require all Seattle City Council candidates seeking endorsement to return a completed questionnaire.** We will be scheduling endorsement interviews soon. Please return this questionnaire by Tuesday, June 9 so we can work to schedule your interview.

UFCW 21 members use their collective strength by standing together for fair treatment, economic justice, and family wage jobs.

Many people in our state and nation struggle to make ends meet despite working at least one job. By and large, union members fare better in these challenging economic times than non-union workers. We are doing our part in 2009 to grow the number of union members in the state. We are looking for courageous leaders running for office who are eager to stand up for workers, who are compelled to encourage a company to bargain in good faith and reach fair contracts, who are not afraid to be considered pro-labor, and who feel strongly that no one should feel threatened or intimidated for wanting to join a union.

We appreciate the time you will take to answer these questions. Please mail a completed copy to the address below. Alternatively, an electronic copy can be obtained from Political Director Karen Deal via kdeal@ufcw21.org.



Dave Schmitz, President



Diane Zahn, Secretary Treasurer



Karen Deal

Demographic Information

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Consultant: The Advocacy Group

Position Running For: Seattle City Council, Position 2

Opponent(s): David Ginsberg

Boards & Commissions Served On: City Light Rate Advisory Committee, Alternative Resources Committee; Board of Health, Seattle/King County; Growth Management Planning Council; Green-Duwamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council

Restoring Workers' Right to Organize

1. When workers try to form unions, employers routinely respond with campaigns of intimidation, coercion, misinformation, and even by firing their employees. As many as one-quarter of employers illegally fire workers who try to form unions.

Federal Labor Law Broken

In theory, federal law protects workers' freedom to form a union. In reality, however, the weakness of current federal labor law enables employers to routinely thwart workers' unionization efforts. Despite this intimidation, annual tracking polls demonstrate that nearly 60 million Americans would form a union tomorrow if given the chance.

The WalMart Example

WalMart workers are organizing now to form their union with UFCW across the nation. Here are just a few of WalMart's anti-union tactics they are employing daily, right now:

- workers are being interrogated about their support of the union
- workers are forced to sit through captive audience meetings where they are lectured about how bad unions are
- workers are grilled in one-on-one meetings with their supervisors
- workers are shown anti-union videos; threatened with store closings, and more.
- And this is what they're doing when they know Congress is watching!

American Public Supports Labor Law Reform

More than three-quarters of Americans—77 percent—support strong laws that give employees the freedom to make their own choice about whether to have a union in their workplace without interference from management. This explains why passing The Employee Free Choice Act is our #1 federal priority this year.

Employee Free Choice Act is our Priority

- Workers get a choice of how they want to form their union (would allow a majority of employees at a company to organize by signing cards)
- Once workers choose to form a union, they get a contract (provides mediation and arbitration if management and the union can't agree on a contract within a reasonable time)
- There are real penalties for corporations who retaliate and break the law (right now, all the company has to do is pay a fired worker their backpay or post a notice telling workers they won't do it again!)

The legislation doesn't prohibit the traditional process of elections and secret ballots. If a majority of workers want to proceed that way, they still could.

In order to help strengthen our community, would you be willing to:

- A. Urge employers to respect their employees' right to form a union by remaining neutral during a union organizing campaign? **Yes X** No ____
- B. Urge employers to recognize a union voluntarily when the majority of their employees choose to form one? **Yes X** No ____
- C. Write a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? **Yes X**No ____
- D. Write a letter to urge an employer to re-hire a worker fired because s/he supported the union during an organizing drive? **Yes X** No ____
- F. Publicly support the Employee Free Choice Act? **Yes X** No ____

Equitable Development & Land Use

2. UFCW 21 is a member of Puget Sound Sage, a local nonprofit focused on advocacy for responsible development, affordable housing, living wages, and a fair, healthy economy. Development often has negative, as well as positive, impacts on a community. Large developments, left unchecked, can disrupt communities and displace small business. Puget Sound Sage and other organizations hope to, among other goals, prevent the erosion of community standards we've worked so hard to secure and maintain throughout our core industries. Puget Sound Sage and its member organizations are using Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) as a tool to address community impacts and promote development that benefits workers, neighbors, small businesses, and developers. CBAs are contracts signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of community benefits that the developer agrees to provide as part of a development project.

Do you support the concept of Community Benefit Agreements?

Yes X No ____

Will you actively encourage developers, with whatever legal and other appropriate means at your disposal, to enter into a CBA with community organizations such as Puget Sound Sage? **Yes X** No ____

3. The Dearborn CBA is an example of the community demanding that development create living wage jobs. Both creation of living wage jobs and access to those jobs are major barriers facing many workers in low-income communities in our city.

What will you do to ensure that development leads to living wage jobs for people from the communities who need them the most?

I am very intrigued by Community Benefits Agreements, support the concept, and was very pleased to see the effective work of Puget Sound SAGE in securing such an agreement. I consulted with Puget Sound SAGE during the discussions on the street vacations, provided suggestions to them as to how they could be most effective and what the City could do, and coordinated with them as the issues developed. Land Use regulations make it very challenging to enter into these discussions purely around land use issues, and impossible if the Council is acting in a quasi-judicial matter, but the street vacation (which I may have been the one who suggested focusing on) turned out to be a good instrument. I would do so again. Among the other actions that I have taken and would do again are:

- casting the decisive vote to reject the Hedreen proposal to transfer development credits to build a non-union hotel. Without my vote, the deal would have gone through - but I didn't bow to pressure and stood up when I was most needed;
- writing the University of Washington to support the graduate students when they overwhelmingly voted for representation by GSEAC/UAW and the University stonewalled recognizing their union and negotiating a contract, writing Northwest Hospital President Bill Schneider calling on him to agree to a quick union election and refrain from anti-union activities, and speaking at the rallies for SEIU District 1199NW's Northwest Hospital organizing drive;
- writing an op-ed and joining rallies on behalf of SEIU Local 6's organizing campaign for security guards, writing a letter to Darigold supporting Teamsters 66 members when Darigold locked them out, and writing the grocery companies in support of UFCW 1105 against a Southern California style lockout;
- supporting the efforts of SEIU to ensure that the RFP for security services at Seattle City Hall makes wages and working conditions a criteria for evaluation;
- refusing to support rezoning of the Port's North Bay site that would have reduced the potential for industrial jobs;
- opposing the use of the Design Build Operate Maintain contract for the Seattle Monorail because it would have excluded ATU 587 from representing the operating and maintenance staff.

Whenever I am asked, I have supported workers in their struggles to organize unions, bargain good contracts, and achieve a decent standard of living for their families.

4. Last December, City Council passed an incentive zoning policy that will require developers to set aside 17.5% of the bonus area received in an upzone for housing affordable to households making up to 80% of area median income. This policy failed to address the needs of low-wage workers being pushed out of our city's communities.

What will you do to ensure the creation of housing affordable to workers making 30-50% of area median income in developing communities, including the use of incentive and bonus programs?

I played a key role in the creation of Seattle's Transfer of Development Rights and Bonus programs, which require the development and funding of low income housing as a prerequisite for building in downtown zones. I also assisted in developing the incentive zoning program, which extends these concepts to other zones around the City. I will continue to be involved in the work of government and community based agencies to increase the supply of low income housing in Seattle. I was one of the Councilmembers who ensured that the Low Income Housing Levy was expanded in 2002, and will support expanding it again this year. I will only support redevelopment of low income housing that ensures full replacement of all low income housing units and a guarantee that every family will have the opportunity to move back into the redeveloped community.

I endorse the commitment to "A Roof Over Every Head", and will work to implement plans to create a governance structure to address homelessness issues, to improve data collection, and to build the community will to achieve this goal. I recognize, however, that there are significant shortfalls in both the Ten-Year Plan and in the funding and implementation that has been committed to it, and support additional steps that will address the issue of homelessness.

I am committed to realigning funding support as needed in order to support programs that research has demonstrated to be effective and to coordinate the provision of services from prevention and service programs. I am also committed to ensuring that the City continues to fund human service and housing programs as a high priority.

5. Where the government has a proprietary interest in a development, would you support the inclusion of labor peace requirements (a provision that provides the landlord with certainty that there is a reliable labor dispute mechanism) in future RFPs and development agreements? **Yes x No** ____

6. Other cities in the U.S. have adopted legislation that allows local elected bodies to condition or veto a hotel development project or retail "superstore" based on an analysis of the development's impacts on the community. Such an ordinance would require applicants to provide a detailed and credible analysis of the effects of a proposed hotel or "superstore" on the existing public revenues, public resources, area wages and benefits, environmental infrastructure, total vehicle miles traveled, and the like.

Would you support including in the city's permitting process this type of "Economic Impact Analysis" for new hotel, superstore and other large-scale developments?
Yes ____ **No** ____

Please explain why or why not.

It is not clear to me that this would actually have as much impact as more direct efforts to support union organizing in this industry. There are also real legal risks in bringing labor issues into land use legislation. I have supported and worked with the Dearborn Street Coalition in their work to find a way to incorporate fair labor standards in the agreement with the developers, and to use the City's street vacation process as a way to engage the City's authority in ensuring that these guarantees were effective. It was not legally possible to engage in these discussions under the provisions of the land use code, and I am very doubtful if the mechanism that you are proposing here will turn out to be workable.

7. The Washington State Convention and Trade Center (WSCTC) is proposing a major expansion of its facilities. More than 1,000 hotel jobs are likely to result from such an expansion. In what manner would you be willing to work with UNITE HERE Local 8 to ensure that the jobs directly and indirectly created from this expansion are family-wage jobs with quality, affordable health and retirement benefits?

I would commit to working with UNITE HERE Local 8 to exert whatever influence I have to making this happen, including voting against discretionary city legislation that would be needed to permit this expansion if there are not appropriate labor provisions. As noted above, I demonstrated my willingness to take these kinds of stands when I voted to deny the Transfer of Development Rights credits to the proposed Hedreen hotel project.

Fair Wages & Benefits

8. Currently, wages in the city are not keeping up with housing prices. Would you advocate for a city-wide living wage ordinance? Yes ___ No X

Please explain why or why not and what do you consider a living wage?

I support the concept of a living wage, which would be well above the current minimum wage. However, I am not convinced that a City wage ordinance will be either legally defensible or workable, and it would do little good if it led to jobs being relocated elsewhere. I am willing to consider the legal and policy arguments in favor of this kind of ordinance, and to change my mind if the evidence shows that it is something that will make a difference.

8. Do you support requiring any business which receives public support in the form of tax breaks and the like, to provide jobs with living wages & benefits?
Yes X No ___

How would you do this?

I am a strong supporter of Project Labor Agreements, which have been very effective for the building trades in public construction projects. I would support similar provisions in other areas where the City is involved with private businesses. However, the City is constitutionally precluded from providing most tax breaks, so there are not likely to be many businesses that would fall into that category.

10. Like many leaders of local, state, and national government, Seattle politicians have embraced the rhetoric of "green jobs." But there is mounting concern as to whether new "green jobs" in energy conservation and alternative energy production will be good jobs, with wage standards and apprenticeship pathways to family-wage careers.

Do you support the application of job standards such as apprenticeship utilization and prevailing wage to City facilitated jobs in energy conservation and alternative energy production? **Yes X** **No** ____

What will you do to make sure these jobs go to low-income people and people of color?

I am a strong supporter of apprenticeship requirements, and would make those the key tool for implementing this idea. Recently, I successfully worked to prevent Seattle Public Utilities from reducing its apprenticeship program as part of a round of budget cuts, and have taken the same position on proposed City Light budget reductions. I would consult with UNITE HERE to determine what solution would work best for this.

Fair Immigration Policy

11. Do you support policies like Seattle's "Don't Ask" ordinance that prohibits police or government employees from asking about a person's immigration status? **Yes X**
No ____

12. Do you think that local agencies should cooperate with federal agencies in enforcing immigration laws? **Yes** ____ **No X**

Freedom to Join a Union Pledge

When workers try to form unions, employers routinely respond with campaigns of intimidation, coercion, misinformation, and even by firing their employees. As many as one-quarter of employers illegally fire workers who try to form unions. In theory, federal law protects workers' freedom to form a union. In reality, when America's workers seek a voice on the job, they struggle to maintain their basic workplace right: the freedom to join a union.

Studies show that nearly 60 million Americans would form a union tomorrow if given the chance. More than three-quarters of Americans—77 percent—support strong laws that give employees the freedom to make their own choice about whether to have a union in their workplace without interference from management.

We ask all candidates to commit to standing up for basic rights for all workers, including the right to organize. By signing this pledge, you are committing to these basic principles:

- To publicly support and encourage workers who are organizing a union with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
- To publicly support and actively encourage the position that workers should be able to freely choose whether they want to gain a voice on the job by unionizing without intimidation or employer interference. This includes publicly encouraging employers to remain neutral on the question of unionization.
- To publicly support and actively encourage the position that no taxpayer money should be spent interfering with the right of workers to freely choose to join a union.
- To publicly support and actively encourage a fair and fast process for determining worker support for unionization, including majority sign-up or card check recognition.
- To publicly support and actively encourage employers to swiftly negotiate good faith collective bargaining agreements with their workers and to abide by the terms of those agreements.

I am proud to sign this. As my record noted above illustrates, I am not only committed to these principles, but have acted on them in many ways in the past and will do so again in the future.

Signature: 

Printed Name: Richard Conlin

Office Held/Sought: Seattle City Council, Position 2

Today's Date: June 9, 2009

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND PLEDGE FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Please attach your biography, a list of current endorsements and any campaign literature you have printed to date. If you like, you may provide additional comments below. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Endorsed By: Sierra Club, King County Conservation Voters, 11th and 37th District Democrats, SEIU 1199NW, Seattle-King County Association of Realtors, IFTPE Local 17, Operating Engineers Local 609, Hon. Tim Burgess, Hon. Reuven Carlyle, Hon. Sally Clark, Hon. Bob Ferguson, Hon. Jean Godden, Hon. Larry Gossett, Hon. Bruce Harrell, Hon. Bob Hasegawa, Hon. Zack Hudgins, Hon. Adam Kline, Hon. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Hon. Ed Murray, Honorable Eric Pettigrew, Hon. Tom Rasmussen, Hon. Peter Steinbrueck, Hon. Jim Street, many other individuals

Those of us who are committed to social and economic justice for working people face a still challenging national political and economic climate and major fiscal challenges at the state and local level, but combined with the promise of new hope and leadership in the Presidency. It is critical for working people to have champions in elected office. I share the values of the labor movement and I am proud to represent those values on the City Council. Your support provides an affirmation of my efforts and I believe it will be critical to my re-election. I am attaching a resume and list of accomplishments.

Whenever I am asked, I have supported workers in their struggles to organize unions, bargain good contracts, and achieve a decent standard of living for their families.

At the City level, I have participated in the Labor-Management Leadership Committee and supported labor's place at the table. When the City hired contract workers in information technology, I stood up for IFPTE Local 17 and successfully fought to have permanent positions created instead. When the Mayor proposed cutting firefighter positions and closing a fire station, I spoke against it and was willing to vote to cut the Mayor's office budget instead. When the Mayor proposed to cut the Bookmobile and lay off the WSCCCE Council 2 employees, I proposed a tax increase to keep the Bookmobile running, and got my colleagues to support it.

Incidentally, my daughter is a member of UFCW Local 21!