

Snoqualmie Indian Tribe Voters Guide 2016 | Patty Murray Full Responses

Murray is running for U.S. Senate for Washington State

Do you have experience working with tribes?

Yes. I have worked with tribal governments and inter-tribal organizations throughout my time in the U.S. Senate. First and foremost, I believe it is essential to start with the issue of tribal sovereignty, and to work to restore and protect that through my work. Throughout my career I have worked to address issues of importance to Washington state tribes; from the relocation of reservations out of flood and tsunami zones; to salmon habitat restoration; to restoring sovereignty for tribes in the prosecution of domestic abusers on their reservations, regardless of the status of the abuser; to working to repatriate the remains of the Ancient One; I have listened to concerns raised by Washington tribes and worked to address those issues in Congress.

If you were elected, how would you and your staff interact with tribes?

I would continue the engagement efforts I have consistently conducted throughout my career: one-on-one meetings in my Washington, D.C. office on specific issues; coffee with multiple tribal leaders in Washington, D.C. when events occur in Washington, D.C. such as NCAI or White House Summits; and visits to reservations across the state (for example, I visited the Snoqualmie Reservation in July 2013 to meet with tribal leadership and youth). I and my staff believe it is important to both provide the opportunity to meet in Washington, D.C. and to get a better understanding of issues and opportunities on the ground through meetings in the state. As such, I have made it a priority for my tribal staff to visit reservations in the state. We currently make an effort to both receive incoming and solicit feedback on suggested legislation or future efforts, and I expect that to continue.

What is your position on tribal sovereignty?

I believe the federal government has a responsibility to live up to the promises the U.S. government made through treaties with tribal nations, and as such I have worked to safeguard the sovereignty of tribal governments and the government-to-government relationship between tribal governments and the U.S. federal government. This belief permeates all aspects of my work on tribal issues, from the work I do on salmon restoration and habitat protection, to support for education and health care services, to my work on the tribal provisions in VAWA 2013 or my support of the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act in 2014 to ensure tribal sovereignty is protected when it comes to social programs.

Would you support the Tribe in its duty to protect sacred Snoqualmie Falls? If so, how?

It is important for religious and cultural sites to be respected. As such, I believe it is important for the federal government to engage in meaningful consultation with impacted tribes when they are reviewing requests for permits. This is something I have worked to ensure throughout my career, and will continue to do if I am re-elected in November.

Do you support increasing funding to tribes for treaty-guaranteed services such as education and health care?

We have a responsibility to live up to the promises the U.S. government made, and that means it is important to meet funding needs for tribal health care, education, natural resources, and other treaty-protected rights. As a senior member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, one of my top priorities each year is robust funding for tribal accounts, including in education, health care, and natural resources management, which is particularly important for Washington tribes as co-managers of our salmon resource.

What is your position on the collection of tax, on tribal lands?

Self-governance is an important tenet of tribal sovereignty, guaranteed through the government-to-government relationship of tribes to the federal government. Control over revenue streams is an important aspect of tribal sovereignty.

Would you support tribal representation in the Federal level?

I believe our federal government works best when representatives best reflect the community at large, and as such support the increase of diversity in the federal government and among elected officials. It is important for diverse views and priorities to be brought to the table. I believe it is important for the federal government to engage in meaningful consultation with impacted tribes, another way for tribes to raise their voices.