

Snoqualmie Indian Tribe Voters Guide 2016 | Kim Wyman Full Responses

Wyman is running for Secretary of State

Do you have experience working with tribes?

As Secretary of State I have worked with tribes to ensure that their needs are being met on a statewide level. We are always striving to improve our performance and ensure we are reaching all tribal members to enable them to register to vote and cast an accessible ballot. We also focus on sharing the stories and contributions of Washington State's tribal members through our Legacy Washington program. For example, books on people like Billy Franks Jr. are in public schools and libraries across the state thanks to our relationships. As Thurston County Auditor, I worked with the Nisqually Tribe to ensure that we encouraged voting among tribal members. I am proud to be endorsed by the Nisqually Tribe, and am proud to have worked with tribes as County Auditor and Secretary of State to ensure that tribes and tribal members are able to make their voices heard.

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

My staff and I are committed to serving all Washington voters from all across the state, including tribes. We seek out Washington residents from every corner of the state to learn how we can better serve their interests when it comes to voting, registering businesses, and providing other services we offer.

One of the things I hear frequently from tribal members is the need for protecting and preserving our history and passing it on to the next generation. With the state library and archives in my office, I want to work with tribal members from across the state to insure not only that we are capturing the documents and publications that tell the stories of our First Nation peoples' contributions to our state, but also teaching younger generations about those contributions.

Another area I would like to focus on is working with tribal leaders to identify ways to improve civic engagement among tribal members. If people believe barriers to voting exist, I want to identify those barriers and provide solutions, like ballot drop boxes. While the Secretary of State does not have control over drop boxes, I have a track record of improving access. We piloted the largest dropbox test program in the state when I was Thurston County Auditor, and when I left office we had more dropboxes than any other county! I am also working with Congressman Denny Heck to find a workable way to achieve postage-free ballots. Because Washington determines whether a ballot can be counted by the date of the postmark, it is not a simple solution, and requires changes to federal law. I am confident we can make it work, and make voting more accessible for all voters.

What is your position on tribal sovereignty?

While my office does not have statutory influence on this issue, I support the sovereignty of tribes to govern themselves. Particularly when it comes to voting in state and local elections, my office must ensure that members of all Washington State tribes are provided every opportunity to register to vote and to cast a secure and accessible ballot.