

Strom H. Peterson

9323 Olympic View Drive
Edmonds, Washington 98026
(206) 799-7363
(425) 775-2774
stromscheese@gmail.com

Strom Peterson is a Washington State Representative who has put his legislative priorities on housing, public safety, environmental sustainability, and a commitment to protecting the quality of life of residents in the 21st District. Strom currently chairs the Housing, Human Services, and Veterans Committee and serves on the Civil Rights and Judiciary and Capital Budget Committees. He is also a member of the Legislative and Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (LEWPRO). Strom grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and received his B.A. in English from the University of New Mexico. He and his wife, Maria Montalvo, settled in Edmonds in 2001, and founded three successful small businesses in Edmonds. Strom and Maria are active members of the Edmonds community and live in the Seaview neighborhood of Edmonds with their beloved Bitzer, Lulu. He is dedicated to serving with integrity and leads through collaborating, working to get things done by effective debate, compromise, and sound judgment.

Education:

- BA, Creative Writing, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1992
- Masters of Public Administration, Coursework, University of New Mexico, 1999
- Project Management Certification, TVI, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1999

Civic and Professional Affiliations:

Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), board member
Downtown Edmonds Merchant Association, Past President
Edmonds Chamber of Commerce, Past Board Member
Edmonds Center for the Arts, Council Liaison

Public Service History:

2015-present

Washington State Representative, 21st Legislative District, WA

2009-2014

City Council Member, Position 4, City of Edmonds, Edmonds, WA

Employment History:

2001-2021

Small Business Owner/Cheesemonger, Edmonds, Washington, Olives Gourmet Foods, The Resident Cheesemonger, and The Cheesemonger's Table

1994-2000

Small Business Owner, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Wood Meridian Construction Company

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1. Please explain in 200 words or fewer your qualifications to serve as a county councilmember.
 2. Please describe in 200 words or fewer the role of a county councilmember.
 3. Please identify and summarize the three most important issues facing Snohomish County and how you would begin to address them.
 4. Please describe in 200 words or fewer how you will work with people with different points of view than you.
 5. Please describe in 200 words or fewer your experience working with others to advance policy and budget issues.
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1. I am proud to have served my community in elected office since 2009, first as an Edmonds City Councilmember and currently as State Representative for the 21st District. I have a record of working closely with constituents, advocates, and fellow elected officials to achieve success. For example, I worked closely with Councilmember Brian Sullivan, the Snohomish Health District, and countless advocates to pass a first in the nation statewide drug takeback bill with strong bi-partisan support. I have also had similar success in areas such as housing, environmental protections, tribal sovereignty, and infrastructure spending. I am also very familiar with the budget process having served as Council President three times and vice-chair of the State Capital Budget Committee. I have also, until recently, been a small business owner, having owned three successful businesses in Edmonds for the past 20 years, collaborating with other businesses in town and serving on the Edmonds Chamber of Commerce board. This has given me the unique perspective and understanding of the importance of supporting our small business community as well as making sure we have a well-paid workforce.
 2. The primary role of a County Council Member is to listen to constituents. There are incredibly important decisions to be made at the local level of government that directly impacts peoples' day to day lives. As we see politics on the national scene too often fall into partisanship and stagnation, it is our local governments who must take up the call to deliver. We must let our constituents know what services are actually delivered by our county departments and employees. From public safety, to help with housing, to creating long term visions for our communities, to name a few, county government plays an important role that is often overlooked. Letting people know that they have direct access to council members is an integral part of the work we should all strive to achieve. Of course, council members must do more than listen, they should also lead. From policy choices to budget priorities the council needs to work closely with, but independently from, the County Executive's office.
 3. The three most important issues facing the County, and the reasons I am seeking this appointment, are housing, the opioid crisis, and our environment. These are three issues I have focused on most intently while in Olympia, and I will bring that knowledge

and success (and sometimes failure) to this job. On housing, we need an all hands-on deck approach. From emergency housing to help our most vulnerable to working with state and city officials, housing advocates, builders, and others to find ways to build more affordable housing stock so working people, young families, and retirees can live in the communities that are important to them.

The opioid crisis is something close to my heart as my family, and far too many families in our county, have suffered devastating losses due to this national epidemic. While I do not want to discount the critical role law enforcement plays in helping take on this scourge, we know that the decades old war on drugs was wholly unsuccessful. We will not arrest our way out of this. Instead, we must focus our efforts on treatment for those in the throes of addiction, early interventions for those heading down that path, and prevention as this problem affects every demographic in our community. This will take serious funding and a commitment from all of us to work together.

On the environmental front, one issue that Snohomish County can lead on is protecting Puget Sound by investing in smart storm water infrastructure. Successful models of public-private partnerships around the country have created family wage jobs, built small businesses, and made significant impacts on cleaning up storm water. Working with our Federal partners, tribes, local governments and small businesses we can make much needed improvements to water quality to improve salmon stocks and help save our endangered orca population.

4. Working across the aisle has been, and continues to be, one of the areas at which I have been most successful. As a city council member, I worked with Mayors Haakensen, Cooper, and Earling, all with different styles and political outlooks, to pass and enact budgets that met the needs of the citizens, even during the tough days of the Great Recession. As State Representative, I have been able to continue that success of working across the aisle and bringing together diverse points of view to find consensus. For example, I had been the prime sponsor of a statewide plastic bag law that was stuck in a partisan deadlock. I reached out to small grocers in Eastern Washington, large grocery chains, the pulp and paper industry, and environmental advocates. We literally sat in a room together until we came up with a plan that could get broad support and achieve significant environmental impacts. The bill passed both chambers with strong bi-partisan support. Being able to bring together staunch environmentalists and conservative business interests to create a national model is something I am incredibly proud of.
5. As a State Representative, each session entails working with elected officials, staffers, advocates, and constituents on dozens of bills and budget priorities. One such example from my time as vice-chair of the Capital Budget Committee, I had the honor of working with Republican Representative Norma Smith. As Chair and ranking member, Representative Smith and I worked quietly together, meeting with staff and experts to create a plan for historic funding for mental health and drug treatment. It was not about

headlines or egos, it was about seeing the struggling families in our respective communities and finding a way to make a positive impact. As the chair of the Housing, Human Services, and Veterans Committee, one recent policy success dealt with the closure of Community Service Offices run by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). While it made sense to close these offices at the height of the pandemic, it became obvious that our most vulnerable citizens were not able to access the most basic services they need to remain housed or feed their families. While the legislative process can be slow, with bills often taking years to pass, I worked with my colleagues on the Committee to move the bill quickly. The bill ultimately passed both chambers with almost unanimous support and the offices were opened.