



Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Your Details

Basic information about yourself

Name	Hunter Abell
Email	hunter@voteabell.com
Address	208 BARNABY CREEK RD INCHELIUM, WA, 99138
Phone Number	(509) 385-7308
I am a candidate running for...	Washington State House of Representatives, District 7, Position 2
Website Address	http://www.voteabell.com
Please list any/all social media account URLs.	Facebook, LinkedIn

Getting to Know You

This next section will give you the opportunity to provide details about who you are as a person, candidate, and member of the community.

Tell us about yourself.

I love this country and this area. I was born here in the 7th District, part of four generations of my family that proudly call the Inchelium area "home." I was raised on Long Rifle Ranch and enjoyed a childhood characterized by love, hiking, hunting, and fishing.

Today, I am 44-years old. I am a Christian, father of daughters, military veteran, attorney, former judge, business owner, and rancher. Each of those characteristics is discussed more below.

I am a Christian. My faith is central to who I am, how I go about this campaign, and, if elected, how I would serve. I am a member of the Inchelium Community Church.

I am the single father of two beautiful little girls. I am blessed to be their earthly father, and I am honored to teach them that, in this country, we choose our own leaders. They have been wonderful cheerleaders for me in this campaign.

I am a 20+ year Navy veteran, both enlisted/officer and active/reserve. I enlisted 18 months after 9/11 and am now a Commander in the US Navy Reserve. I deployed twice in service to our country. The first was to Baghdad in 2007-2008, and the second was to Guantanamo Bay in 2014-2015. I am a recipient of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

I am a constitutionally-conservative attorney. As such, I have helped families, small businesses, and churches over a 18-year career. I was particularly honored to help churches during the period of overreach by the Governor's office during the Covid-19 pandemic. I was also honored two years ago to be the first elected President of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) to come from the NE Tri County region (Ferry, Stevens or Pend Oreille). My term of service with the WSBA expires in August.

I am a former county officer-holder. I was appointed to serve as the Ferry County District Court Judge in 2023. I was required to step down from that position to seek election for this office. This service gives me unparalleled insight into what works and what doesn't work in fighting against the fentanyl and drug-related violence impacting our state. I also have experience managing the county District Court and being a wise steward of taxpayer dollars.

I am a business man. I am an owner of my law firm, and, while I worked from my kitchen table in Inchelium for a couple of years, my firm established a Spokane office in 2023. I travel into Spokane a couple of times a week for work. I am proud to say that my firm provides good jobs for people in the 7th district, including my legal assistant who lives in Deer Park.

I am a rancher, and a part-owner of Long Rifle Ranch. I own 160 acres in Inchelium and am currently logging. Consequently, I have in-depth knowledge of the issues and challenges facing timber owners. This is an invaluable insight to have for whoever serves in this position.

List any relevant experience, leadership, or service.

U.S. Navy - 2003 - Present. Enlisted 2003, Commissioned 2005. Presently Commander, U.S. Navy JAG Corps. Deployed to Iraq 2007-2008, Guantanamo Bay 2014-2015. Served as Executive Officer of my unit 2020-2022;

Ferry County District Court Judge - 2023-2024. Preside over misdemeanors and small claims actions, lead county office of three employees;

Washington State Bar Association - President, 2023-Present. Serve as President for 40,000+ member mandatory bar association;

Ferry County Bar Association - Vice President, 2023-Present;

Ferry County Republican Party - Vice Chair, 2022-2023;

Ferry County Republican Precinct Committee Officer, Hall Creek Precinct, 2021-2022, 2024-Present;

Rob McKenna for Governor, Veterans Coalition, 2012;

The Federalist Society, Member, 2010-Present;

George Nethercutt for Senate, Volunteer, 2004;

Pacific Legal Foundation, Summer Associate, 2004;

College of William & Mary, College Republicans, Chair, 1999-2000.

Describe your duty to the office you are running for and how you will achieve success.

If elected, other than my faith and my family, my legislative service will be my absolute #1 priority. I have made significant advance preparations to alter my outside obligations to support elected service. That includes stepping down as Judge of Ferry County District Court. That also includes going to part-time status at my law firm (called "Of Counsel"). I have received advance approval from my law firm for that arrangement, if I am elected. Also, since I recently exceeded 20 years of uniformed service, if elected, I will be reevaluating my continued military reserve service. Much will depend on whether or not I am selected for Captain at the current promotion board (results expected in June 2024).

My efforts to serve the entire 7th District will be greatly aided by my physical location. My home in Ferry County is located near the geographic middle of the 7th District. Consequently, it is just as easy for me to reach Spokane as it is Tonasket. East Wenatchee and the Methow Valley are further, but still accessible. I will be capitalizing on that geographic central location in my service, and would intend to regularly visit every county in the 7th.

I intend to achieve success by being a legislator of integrity, a "straight shooter" in my interactions with the public and other members of the Legislature, and someone who is consistently seeking a pragmatic, problem-solving result, while still advancing our District's conservative values. My role model in this service, other than our current legislators, is former Senator Bob Morton who was known to be a principled legislator, a gentleman, and someone who was strongly respected throughout the entire District and Legislature.

What does success look like for this position and what key performance indicators should voters use to evaluate you?

To me, success in this position means consistently, forcefully, and eloquently advocating for our conservative values in Olympia, whether in the minority or majority. Sometimes success will be measured by affirmative bills passed, other times it will be measured by bad bills that were stopped. Ultimately, success will be measured by whether the 7th District is a happier, healthier, and more prosperous place to live, raise a family, worship, and run a business.

Key performance indicators for voters to evaluate me should include, first and foremost, my adherence to the U.S. Constitution and Washington Constitution. After that, key performance indicators include execution of my campaign promises, my voting attendance, and my regular appearance in every county in the District. Although not perfect, legislative scorecards can also be helpful for judging a legislator, including those from Second Amendment, agriculture, business, and faith organizations.

Finally, voters should also judge me on my accessibility and responsiveness. My central location in Ferry County will greatly aid me in responding to constituent inquiries from across the District. Moreover, voters can and should judge me by how long it takes to get a response from me on matters of constituent interest. Whoever is elected to this position must remember that the legislator works for the people, not the other way around.

What community activities are you engaged in? Have you held leadership roles in any of these organizations?

I am a member of the Inchelium Community Church. I joined the church in 2021 when I moved back to Ferry County. I grew up in the Inchelium Community Church, and am proud to call it my church home. I was baptized through Inchelium Community Church. While not strictly a leadership role, I am a member of the "Don Naylor Trio" which regularly performs/inflicts special music on the congregation.

Relatedly, my Christian faith was the reason I successfully pursued permission 14 years ago to put up a Nativity scene at the Washington Capitol. It was a year when there was going to be a Menorrah and an atheist display, but no Christian representation. I was pleased to "step in the gap" during a year when other organizations were unable to do so. See <https://www.spokesman.com/blogs/spincontrol/2010/dec/22/capitol-campus-gets-creche/>

I am a Precinct Committee Officer with the Ferry County Republican Party, and am a former Vice Chair of the organization. I strongly believe that we need to have healthy, vibrant county parties, and I have been honored to serve with wonderful Ferry County Republicans like Lorna Johnson, Nancy Churchill, Phil Beebe, and others. We suffered a major loss last year when Jim Schumacher, our party Treasurer and a dear personal friend, passed away.

I am also active in the local Ferry County legal community, including serving as the Vice President of the Ferry County Bar Association, and serving as the former Ferry County District Court Judge.

Finally, my service in the U.S. Navy takes me regularly into Spokane to the U.S. Navy Reserve Center at 5101 N. Assembly Street, Spokane, WA. This is a special place to me as it is where I was commissioned as an Ensign in 2005. I am also involved in an ongoing effort by the Spokane Navy League to preserve the Ensign Monaghan statue located in downtown Spokane near the Spokane Club. See <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2024/jan/29/new-process-created-to-review-offensive-landmarks-/>

Your Political Beliefs

This section contains a series of questions about your alignment concerning broad governmental philosophies as well as some specific issues.

Where do our rights as citizens of the United States come from? Under what conditions can government infringe or suspend them?

Our rights come from God. They are enshrined in our U.S. Constitution and Washington Constitution.

Infringement or suspension of rights is a grave matter and should be examined with close constitutional scrutiny. At the federal level, there are limited constitutional exceptions where rights may be limited or infringed. For example, the U.S. Constitution provides in Art. 1, Section 9 that the right of habeas corpus may be suspended in cases of rebellion or invasion. This authority was utilized by President Lincoln during the Civil War.

Just because this power exists, however, does not mean that it should be exercised. As a former District Court Judge, I recognize the awesome power that comes with the ability to imprison someone, and fully recognize and honor the importance of the habeas corpus protection.

At the state level, the Governor has emergency authority under RCW 43.06.220. This power is interpreted by the courts to be broad. See *Gonzales v. Inslee*, No. 55915-3-II, Div. II, Washington Court of Appeals, February 23, 2022. Perhaps because of this interpretation, this power is also subject to abuse. I believe that was the case with the February 2020 state of emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Legislature must be constantly on guard to protect the people's liberty from an executive exercising

emergency powers.

The Washington State Constitution, Article XI, Section 11 also provides broad authority to cities, towns, and counties to act in the event of an emergency. RCW 38.52 further analyzes this authority, particularly for disaster response. This power, while broad, is not unlimited, and should be exercised with caution and oversight. As a practical matter, the people will be better able to jealously protect their liberties against emergency action by local officials than they would, for example, by the Governor or the U.S. President. Nevertheless, actions under this authority should also be carefully monitored.

As outlined above, while there are times when it is lawful to infringe or restrict liberties, it should be very rare, carefully monitored, and the Legislature should be aggressive in the defense of the people's rights. This is reinforced by Article I, Section 37 of the Washington Constitution, which provides as follows: "A frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is essential to the security of individual right and the perpetuity of free government." Those "fundamental principles" undoubtedly include jealously guarding against abuse of emergency authorities, whether by federal, state, or local officials.

Do you consider yourself a constitutional originalist or do you prescribe to it as a living document? Please explain.

I am an originalist. I am a long-time member of the Federalist Society and have been active in defending the U.S. Constitution and Washington Constitution, as originally written and understood, throughout my entire career.

What is the purpose of government? If elected, how will you perform your duties based on that "purpose?"

The purpose of government is, at heart, to protect the people's liberties.

At the federal level, the broader purpose of the federal government is outlined in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, i.e. "in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity[...]" That is an apt explanation of the limited role of the federal government.

At the state level, the Preamble to the Washington State Constitution reinforces how government is intended to protect the people's liberties: "We, the people of the State of Washington, grateful to the Supreme Ruler of the universe for our liberties, do ordain this constitution." The Preamble is strikingly simple and gives thanks to God for the liberties we enjoy. The rest of the Washington State Constitution is designed to secure and protect those freedoms.

If elected, I will perform my duties with an eye toward constantly ensuring the people's liberties are protected and vindicated. This includes defending our constitutional freedoms "from all enemies, foreign and domestic," as I have sworn as a U.S. Navy officer.

When does life begin and at what point does the government have a duty to protect it?

I believe life begins at conception and that the government should have a duty to defend it at that point. I recognize that the law in Washington is very different than I would like. I support all legislative attempts to promote a culture of life and protect the weakest among us.

I view the pro-life cause as very similar to the anti-slavery efforts of the 18th and 19th century. If elected, I would model my efforts for the unborn on two giants of the anti-slavery effort: William Wilberforce and John Quincy Adams.

Do you have any criminal convictions, ever filed for bankruptcy, have any active or unresolved tax liens, any conflicts of interest that may jeopardize your candidacy?

No.

Describe how you will make yourself available to your constituents and vote as their representative, adhering to the values and answers you've provided in this questionnaire.

I am committed to representing the entire "Fighting 7th" District. My home in Ferry County is near the

geographic center of the District, and allows me comparatively easy access to each of the far-flung corners of our District. I intend to regularly appear in each of the counties of the 7th and make myself available to hear the questions and concerns of the people of this area.

As for my vote, I intend to vote in accordance with the answers provided in this questionnaire. If I change my mind on an issue, I will ensure the voters are aware and understand the basis for the change of mind. On matters of principle, however, my views are firm and long-standing.

Please provide any feedback, comments, or questions that you have for the SCRCC.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to further participation in the vetting process.

Upload your photo for promotional use here.



Please rate this process.

