

Washington Education Association Political Action Committee  
2010 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire



Candidate: Christine Rolfes

Office Sought: State Representative, LD 23 Position 2

These are my official positions in seeking state office.

Candidate Signature:

Date: May 2, 2010

*Candidates: Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to your local WEA council office.*

## WEA-PAC 2010 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Washington Education Association members advocate for our students and the education profession. We have three legislative priorities:

- Education funding, including educator compensation
- Commonsense education reform and accountability
- Protecting workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively

Please indicate whether you support or oppose the following WEA positions, and explain why.

### Education Funding, including educator compensation

Washington Education Association members believe the State of Washington must fulfill its paramount duty to amply fund our public schools.

The 2009 Legislature passed SHB 2363, which suspended the annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for education employees for two years. The COLAs were mandated by voter-approved Initiative 732. SHB 2363 requires the Legislature to reinstate educators' annual COLA in the 2011-12 school year AND incrementally restore the COLA percentage educators lost during the two-year suspension. After four years, educator salaries will be what they would have been without the suspension.

WEA supports current law (SHB 2363), which reinstates the annual COLA for educators in the 2011-12 school year and incrementally restores the lost COLA percentage over four years.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: It's fair to reinstate the COLA, particularly because the pressures on education employees have only increased as a result of state funding cuts during the recession.

WEA supports a minimum starting salary of \$45,000 for teachers and other certificated education employees. We also believe education support professionals deserve at least a living wage as starting pay, and we support salary increases that exceed the cost of living for higher education faculty and staff.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: I support a starting salary that at a minimum attracts new talented people to our schools and salary increases that are sufficient to retain and reward existing talented staff.

The 2009 Legislature passed ESHB 2261, which sets out to "enhance the current salary allocation model" through deliberation and input from "teachers, administrators and classified employees. WEA members oppose tying teacher pay, in whole or in part, to student achievement or test scores.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position: Teacher effectiveness in the classroom is just one of many factors that contribute to student achievement (or lack of it).

WEA believes any alternative compensation system must be subject to local collective bargaining, fully funded, available to all and based on objective criteria.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position: Seems fair.

WEA opposes differentiated pay based on the subject taught.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position: This seems important to the morale within a school environment, but I'm interested in hearing more about this.

WEA supports the current practice of providing salary bonuses and other support for teachers who achieve certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position: This is one means for rewarding teachers who take the extra steps to improve their knowledge and skills.

Washington educators currently are required to work until they reach age 65 to qualify for their normal retirement pension, regardless of the number of years they serve. Some educators must work more than 40 years before earning their normal pension. WEA supports legislation that allows educators to retire with their full normal pension based on the number of years they work rather than requiring them to reach an arbitrary age of eligibility.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position: This is true of other professions, like law enforcement. One issue of concern is the cost to the pension system, so a revamp needs to address funding priorities.

The 2009 Legislature passed ESHB 2261, which changes the definition of basic education and makes other changes to the K-12 school system. WEA members called ESHB 2261 a "false promise" because it ignored the current underfunding of basic education and did not include new funding. WEA members believe the state Legislature should keep its promise and fully fund the programs called for by this bill, which is estimated to cost an additional \$3 billion annually.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: I disagree that it was a "false promise," but agree that we should fully fund the programs called for by the bill.

The 2010 Legislature passed SHB 2776, which promises to reduce the average K-3 class size to no more than 17 students per teacher by the 2017-18 school year. Washington currently has some of the nation's largest average class sizes, and the Legislature recently eliminated Initiative 728 class-size-reduction funding. WEA believes the Legislature must restore funding for Initiative 728 and provide the additional state funding to reduce class sizes as promised by SHB 2776.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: I fought strongly against cutting the I-728 funding, and providing funding for class-size reductions is one of my highest legislative priorities.

**Commonsense Education Reform and Accountability**

In the 2010 legislative session, WEA helped draft and pass SB 6696, a research-based approach to improving student achievement. This legislation was forged between the Governor, the Legislature and education stakeholders, and it represents a major step forward in reforming teacher evaluation, assistance to struggling schools and teacher certification. SB 6696 establishes statewide criteria for teacher evaluations and allows local school districts and education associations to develop their own local evaluation systems. The legislation was tailored to the needs and conditions of Washington State and will allow our state to compete for federal Race to the Top funding.

**WEA supports SB 6696 as passed by the Legislature in 2010 and opposes further changes to the law.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: At this time, I don't see any need to change the law, but I'm open to reviewing it.

**WEA opposes linking teacher evaluations to student test scores.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: It depends upon the test and how it is used, and the evaluation tool and how it is used. I think that teachers could be evaluated on the progress that student cohorts might make within the school year, and I would not want to preclude discussions about that.

**ESHB 2261 established the Quality Education Council (QEC) and individual workgroups on issues such as educator compensation. WEA believes the QEC and related workgroups should solicit the professional input and judgment of public education employees. Any final recommendations should be based on sound research and the expertise of Washington educators.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: Absolutely.

**WEA opposes linking the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) to student graduation. (Passing the HSPE is currently a graduation requirement.)**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support  Oppose

Please explain your position: I support the current system, which provides for alternative routes, but agree that students with special needs should not be expected to pass the test for graduation.

**Protecting Workers' Rights**

WEA strongly supports the right of public education employees to organize, bargain collectively and engage in the political and legislative processes. WEA believes commonsense education reform can be developed effectively and collaboratively at the local level through the collective bargaining process. WEA supports legal protections against discrimination or intimidation for workers who exercise their right to organize.

**WEA supports workers' rights to due process.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support   x      Oppose       

Please explain your position:

**WEA supports the right of public school employees to engage in the political process, both individually and collectively.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support   x      Oppose       

Please explain your position:

**WEA supports giving community and technical college faculty the right to bargain salaries at the local level, a right enjoyed by all other education union members in the state.**

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support   x      Oppose       

Please explain your position:

**Education Experience**

*Who was the most influential teacher you had in school and why?*

Mrs. Watkins, 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts and Social Studies. She recognized my strengths, challenged me to do my best, and introduced me to the world of public policy – which I did not know existed.

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### **Campaign Plans**

*Please describe your campaign plan for fundraising and doorbelling.*

*Please list endorsements by noteworthy elected officials.*

*Tell us about your plan for getting your message out to voters. I intend to run an aggressive grassroots campaign that builds upon my 2006 and 2008 efforts. As of today, I do not know the caliber of my potential opponent, but I have hired a campaign manager and consultant and intend to knock on doors all summer and fall, and raise approximately \$100,000 for a mail piece, television spot, and grassroots organizing.*

**CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME** Christine Rolfes

**HOME STREET ADDRESS**

**CITY & ZIP** Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

**CELL PHONE**

**HOME PHONE**

<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>If school age, what school do they attend?</i>
<u>Leonard Rolfes</u>	<u>Spouse</u>	
<u>Elizabeth Rolfes</u>	<u>Daughter</u>	<u>Sakal Intermediate</u>
<u>Catherine Rolfes</u>	<u>Daughter</u>	<u>Blakely Elementary</u>

**CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

**CAMPAIGN MANAGER** Linda Owens

**CAMPAIGN ADDRESS** People for Christine Rolfes, PMB 118, 19689 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370

**CAMPAIGN E-MAIL** info@electchristine.com

**OFFICE PHONE**  
4592

**CAMPAIGN MGR CELL PHONE** 360-471-

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

(Church, community, service, social, union, professional, etc.)

Rolling Bay Presbyterian Church, Girl Scouts USA, Bainbridge Island Rotary Club, Kitsap CASH (Community Assisted Self-Help) Board Member, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition Board Member, Puget Sound Partnership Coordinating Board, Greater Peninsula Conservancy, Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce, Martha and Mary Leadership Council

**EDUCATION**

MPA University of Washington; BA University of Virginia; Chatham Township High School (NJ)

**BRIEF EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

2007-2010 Representative, Washington State House of Representatives

2000-2005, City Council Member, Bainbridge Island City Council

1995-1999, Program Manager, U.S. Agency for International Development (Moscow Russia, Seattle Washington)

1992-1994, Planner, Kitsap County Department of Community Development