

Washington Education Association Political Action Committee  
2010 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire



Candidate: Mike Sells

Office Sought: State Rep., 38<sup>th</sup> District, Position 2

These are my official positions in seeking state office.

Candidate Signature: Mike Sells

Date: 6/24/10

*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  X  Oppose

Please explain your position:

We need to honor the will of the people, keep our salaries competitive, and attract the best and the brightest to the classrooms of our state.

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  X  Oppose

Please explain your position:

If we want to maintain quality staff, we need to provide decent salaries, benefits and working conditions.

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  X  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

There are a lot more variables to teaching and education than scores on one test. The greatest indicator to student success has been socio-economic background. When we don't provide the necessary resources to bring students up to standard, particularly from low income areas, basing teacher pay on a student test score will ultimately punish those teachers working in schools serving a low income demographic. It makes absolutely no sense, and runs contrary to what needs to be accomplished.

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  X  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

The staff should be a part of developing any alternative compensation systems. It is the only way it will be successful. Cram things down people's throats, and it is a prescription for failure.

WEA opposes differentiated pay based on the subject taught.

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

Please explain your position:

Is English and history less important than math? No. While we may be concerned about a market that needs employees with math skills, we have to also be concerned with a country that has citizens able to read, write and think critically for democracy to continue to be successful. Differentiated pay simply says we value one over the other. That's wrong.

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  X  Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

National Board Teaching Standards should be rewarded. It is a tough process aimed at teaching quality that should be rewarded.

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 X Oppose \_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

Teaching is a tough profession. I know because I represented a lot of teachers as a former President of the Everett Education Association. You put in the time, you should be eligible for retirement benefits.

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 X Oppose \_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

I voted no on HB 2261 in the 2009 session because I was concerned that it was a "false promise." I have seen too much of that with education. I also sponsored amendments to redirect money used for computers for OSPI and committee meetings directed under the bill back to class size relief. While the intent of the sponsors of the bill was positive, there was simply no funding attached to it.

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 X Oppose \_\_\_\_

Please explain your position:

We cannot live up to our promises regarding education funding unless we deal directly with the funding of the class size initiative passed by the people.

**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  X  Oppose

Please explain your position: I voted for it, and am concerned that we provide the funding to implement it properly.

WEA opposes linking teacher evaluations to student test scores.

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

Please explain your position:

Standardized and/or state implemented student testing are only one variable in measuring student success.

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  X  Oppose

Please explain your position: Public education employees are the closest to the delivery point in education. Failure to involve them in recommendations simply is inexcusable.

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  X  Oppose

Please explain your position: Again, it is using one test to determine a person's abilities. That simply does not make sense. No one can prove to me that this one test will determine a

person's success or failure in the future. While standardized testing is a valuable tool in helping educators plan program delivery, one test should not be the final arbiter.

**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: Employees should not be subject to arbitrary actions of management without due process or other recourse. That's simply the fair way we do business.

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:

Of all people, teachers should be an example for students. Participation in political processes by all insures the health of the democracy.

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:

I simply support the right to bargain across the board for faculty at all levels. As a former educator and current executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Snohomish County Labor Council, bargaining gives employees a voice in the workplace, and shows respect and honors the dignity of those doing the job.

## Education Experience

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

*There are number of teachers that were inspiring. Mrs. Joy in Kindergarten and Mrs. Anderson in third grade both nurtured a joy of reading. There was Kent Stowell, a band teacher at Kent Meridian High School, that pushed us toward excellence, and Charles Blondino, an English instructor that made language and literature come alive. At Central Washinton University there was Paul Leroy who gave the most lively history lectures, and encouraged top students to deliver a lecture a quarter. I was lucky enough to give a couple on African and Middle Eastern history.*

## 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 am currently at around \$30,000 in fundraising. My budget will have a couple mailings, and I will be at the doors the next several weeks.*

*My list of endorsements include the following as of this writing:*

### **2010 Endorsements**

#### **Organizational Endorsements**

- Washington Conservation Voters
- Washington State Labor Council
- Washington Education Association PAC
- Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs
- Snohomish County Labor Council
- Everett Firefighters, Local 46
- Washington Fire Chiefs
- Washington Federation of State Employees, Council 28
- American Federation of Teachers/Washington
- 38th Legislative District Democrats
- Aerospace Machinists Industrial District Lodge 751
- Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council
- Laborers Local 292, Everett
- SEIU Local 925
- NARAL Pro Choice Washington PAC
- Planned Parenthood Votes! Washington
- Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28

SEIU Healthcare 775NW

SEIU Healthcare 1199NW

Carpenters Local 562, Everett

Pacific Northwest District Council of Carpenters

Washington State City and County Employees, Council 2

Washington Public Employees Association

### **Individual Endorsements**

- Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive
- Brian Sullivan, Snohomish County Councilman, Dist. 2
- John McCoy, State Representative, 38th District
- Mark Wolken, Everett Port Commissioner
- Shannon Affholter, Everett City Councilman
- Drew Nielsen, Everett City Councilman
- Paul Roberts, Everett City Councilman
- Larry Vognild, Former State Senator, 38th District
- David Simpson, Former State Rep., 38th District
- Bill Bracklin
- Otto Chase
- Curt Eldem
- Diane Flynn
- Peter Jackson
- Suzanne Moreau
- Connie Niva
- Vickie Norris
- Kat Overman
- Roger Pawley
- Michele Meaker Pin
- Marlaine Roberts
- Reid Shockey
- Chad Shue
- James Trefry
- Pat Thompson
- Deborah Wright

**CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME** Mike Sells

**HOME STREET ADDRESS**

**CITY & ZIP** Everett, WA 98201-4211

**CELL PHONE**

**HOME PHONE**

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<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>If school age, what school do they attend?</i>
<u>Gavin Stevens Sells</u>	<u>spouse</u>	
<u>Andrew Michael Sells</u>	<u>son</u>	
<u>Amy Gavin Sells</u>	<u>daughter</u>	

**CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

**CAMPAIGN MANAGER** Allyn Triezenberg

**CAMPAIGN ADDRESS** PO Box 12395, Everett, WA 98206-2395  
repmikesells@hotmail.com

**CAMPAIGN E-MAIL**

**OFFICE PHONE** 425-259-7922 (work phone)

**CAMPAIGN MGR**

**CELL PHONE** (none)

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

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

See attached

**EDUCATION**

See attached

**BRIEF EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

See attached

## About Mike Sells

### Recent work and service history

- 1976 to present. Serving as the elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Snohomish County Labor Council, AFL/CIO. This became a full time position in 1998. The organization is the co-ordinating body for 65 different AFL/CIO unions in Snohomish County which represent over 42,000 working people.
- 1981 to 1998. Served as the President of the Everett Education Association elected on an annual basis. The position started out as ½ time, with the other ½ time spent in the classroom. By the early 90's it became a full time position. From 1969 to 1980, I served as President of the Everett Federation of Teachers, Local 772, AFL/CIO. The EFT was merged with the EEA in 1981.
- 1967 to 1991-Worked as a teacher in Everett School District #2 at both the elementary and secondary level. I taught at North Junior High (now middle school), Jackson Elementary, Evergreen Middle School, the Youth Resource Center (Juvenile Parole Services) and Phoenix Alternative High School.
- 1981 to 2006-Served on the Everett Housing Authority Board which oversees the Federal Housing programs in the City of Everett. Appointment was made by the Mayor of the City of Everett, and approved by City Council. I served I served three terms as chair of the Board. The Board was responsible for oversight of a \$23,890,000 budget.
- 1995 to 2006-Served on the Central Washington University Board of Trustees with two terms as the Vice Chair. I was appointed by Governor Lowry, and reappointed by Governor Locke for a second term in 2000. The Board was responsible for university policy and oversight of the \$65,696,000 budget.
- Served three terms in the State House of Representatives (2005-2006, 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 sessions) 38th District Position 2. Currently the Vice Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and serving on the House Transportation and Government Appropriations Committee



**Other Boards I currently serve on, or have served on.**

- Snohomish County Economic Development Council (1981 to present)
- City of Everett's Shoreline Public Access Advisory Committee (2003)
- City of Everett Salary Commission (1998)
- Snohomish County United Way and Executive Board (mid 80's. Served as one of the Vice Presidents in 1985)
- Washington State Temporary Special Levy Study Commission appointed by Governor Evans (1972-73)
- Washington State Governor's Citizen's Advisory Committee appointed by Governor Lowry (1992-3)
- Snohomish County Needs Assessment on Housing (early 90's, Co-Chaired with County Executive Bob Drewel.)
- Snohomish County Tomorrow (1990-91)
- Snohomish County Executive's Citizens' Cabinet appointed by County Executive Aaron Reardon (2004)
- Democratic Precinct Committee Officer (early 80's until 1985)
- Everett Public Library Strategic Planning Committee (2004)
- Everett Area Chamber of Commerce Board (92-93)
- Central Washington University Alumni Association member

**Other Biographical Information**

- Born in Seattle, July 28, 1945
- Graduated from Kent-Meridian High School in 1963
- Graduated from Central Washington University with a BA in Education, Majoring in History and a minor in Geography in 1967
- 5 th Year Teacher Certification from the University of Washington in 1971

- Married since 1971 to Gayle Stevens Sells. She is currently a piano teacher. We have two grown children. Andy (36) is a musician residing in Seattle. Amy (34) currently lives in Los Angeles, and is a piano teacher.