



Qualitative Assessment of Voters' Pamphlet Content/Format

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Purpose

The Secretary of State's Office, Elections Division, is planning to redesign the Voters' Pamphlet for residents of Washington State. In order to understand voter perceptions of election materials available and to assess voters' information needs and format preferences, the Elections Division decided to explore these issues and responses in depth through a qualitative research methodology.

The primary purpose of the research was to understand how constituents use their Voters' Pamphlets, which information is essential and which is just "nice to have." Because the layout of the candidate information pages reflects the importance of various types of data, the Elections Division decided to test several different page layouts. There also was interest in assessing the people's preferences with respect to size or type of text.

Specific information goals of the research were to understand:

- Whether and to what extent voters use the Voters' Pamphlets
- Priorities for information to be included in the Voters' Pamphlets
- Which information might be omitted or deemphasized
- What other sources constituents consult
- Whom they trust to provide voter information.

Methodology

Gilmore Research Group conducted four focus groups among registered voters living in Pierce County or Yakima County. The sessions were held in Tacoma on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, and in Yakima on Thursday, March 4, 2010, at 6:00 and 8:00pm. Each session lasted about two hours. Voter sample was purchased for each county by zip code. The following criteria were used to qualify respondents by phone using a screening questionnaire:

- Residents had voted in a recent election
- Mix of males and females 18 years of age or older
- Mix of demographics by ethnicity, income, and education

- Mix of geography in each county based on zip code of residence.

A copy of the screening questionnaire is contained in the Appendix of this report. A Respondent Profile for those who participated in the sessions is included in the “Detailed Findings” section. A total of 42 respondents participated in the two focus groups: 22 in Tacoma and 20 in Yakima. There was an almost equal balance of male and female respondents across all of the groups.

The Elections Division supplied Gilmore Research with information regarding items to be included in the card sort exercise and samples to be tested. These items served as a basis for preparation of the discussion guide. We covered the following topics as mentioned in the previous section of this report:

- Voter usage of Voters’ Pamphlets
- Priority of information included (card sort and then discussion)
- Any information that is missing / what else voters would like to know
- What sources of information they prefer / trust
- Reactions to three sample pages and preferences among them with respect to content, layout and font size.

The complete discussion guide used for the focus group sessions may be found in the Appendix of this report.

Highlights of the Findings

1. Overall, voters are aware of the Voters’ Pamphlet published by the State. Many appear to use these pamphlets as one of their main sources of information to prepare to vote.
 - Quite a few focus group respondents report they give more attention to information about initiatives and referenda than to that about candidates. However, they are more apt to read about the local candidates than the federal or state candidates, because they get so much information about the federal and state candidates from the media.
 - A few respondents knew that the Voters’ Pamphlets come from the Secretary of State’s Office, and a few others thought they came from the Auditor’s Office.
 - Respondents believed that some parts of the published information for candidates are submitted by the candidates themselves or their committees. Likewise, they

assumed the initiative sponsors wrote the descriptions of the initiatives and that opposing organizations wrote the rebuttals.

2. The card sort of items that might be included in the Voters' Pamphlet information about candidates showed the following items as more important:
 - **Office** that the candidate was running for was considered almost a given at the top of the page and/or a section heading for a set of candidates.
 - The candidate's **name**, though reportedly not important to many readers, was perceived as the essential means of identifying the person.
 - **Party preference** was deemed an indicator of the platform the candidate supports and, in some cases, determined whether the voter would read about the candidate.
 - **Elected experience** was viewed as a good gauge of the candidate's readiness for the office for which he/she was running. It also meant that the voter might be aware of or learn of the person's past performance.
 - The **personal statement** was considered indicative of what the candidate thinks and hopes to accomplish. Many thought the statement gives great insight into the candidate's character but many others felt that it should be read with some skepticism because the candidate would only submit what he thought would impress the readers.
 - **Education** of the candidate was believed to show something about how prepared the candidate was for public office. The more specific the information, the better they liked it.
3. Among the less important items in the card sort were types of information that they thought they might know or could find easily from other sources or that just did not carry as much weight in their decisions.
 - **Current employment** was ranked in a borderline position between the top and bottom halves of the range, but respondents thought it would be important to know if the person was not in an elected office. Otherwise, it would have been covered under "elected experience."
 - The **professional photograph** was very important to some, not at all to others and just another means of identification for many. Respondents argued over whether one could tell anything about the candidate's character from a photo.
 - **Term length** was assumed to be related to the office for which a candidate is running and something that many know. However, some respondents said it seemed most appropriate to have the term length listed next to the office at the top of the page rather than by candidate.

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- **Other professional experience** was considered of more interest if the candidate has no elected experience. The organizations that candidates might mention in this section may be perceived as included for promotional purposes, so not taken as seriously.
 - **Endorsements** were viewed with some skepticism as well. If the reader knows the organization endorsing the candidate, it may shed some light on the political stance of the candidate or his ability to work with others. On the other hand, endorsements may be confusing because a number of organizations may sound similar but endorse opposing candidates. Endorsements are usually seen on direct mail pieces as well, so accessible elsewhere if one is interested and possibly unnecessary. A few found them inappropriate for the Voters' Pamphlet.
 - **Family status** was definitely "nice to know" but did not seem as relevant to the voting decision. The style of information, what is included and what is left out, may lead a reader to certain conclusions about the candidate as a person or about the person's "stability." However, most felt they would not base a decision on such information.
 - The **physical address** was generally ranked least important of the information needed regarding a candidate, unless one wanted to make a contribution. The email address and website information were considered more relevant, but many respondents only noticed them later, because they were grouped together.
4. Other information that some respondents felt was missing from the Voters' Pamphlets or that they would like to see included:
- Length of residence in the jurisdiction
 - Who supports the candidate financially
 - What the voting record is on key issues
 - More complete information on the judges.
5. Voters frequently mentioned that they rely on the Voters' Pamphlet information more often regarding the initiatives and referenda. These issues appear to be more difficult to understand, and readers reported that they may read and re-read these sections of the pamphlet.
- Respondents said that it is important to have the full text of the issue, despite the difficult legal language.
 - They like the pro and con statements and the rebuttals for each, which help them sort out the issues.

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- The summary was helpful to some, but others thought it could be confusing or misleading.
 - Voters assumed the State wrote the financial impact statements, which they perceived as valuable information in making a decision to vote for or against a measure.
 - It was suggested that the sponsor/originator of an initiative should always be identified in the Voters' Pamphlet.
6. The three samples of candidate information presented to the focus groups generated a variety of opinions regarding the format and amount of information preferable. Although respondents' priorities differed widely, the majority seemed to prefer:
- Visual division between the factual information and the personally supplied information (e.g., Biographical and Statement), although preference for which came first was mixed;
 - A first person version of the statement;
 - Less emphasis on the photographs (with no highlighting behind them);
 - Address information at the bottom, and highlighting of the "For More Information" box; and
 - Headings in the biographical information and comparable segments, for a quick read.
7. With respect to the font size, Sample 2 was definitely described as easy to read, but most respondents would like more information, so the font size of Sample 3 seemed quite acceptable. In fact, most of the focus group participants would be willing to trade off the small font size in Sample 1 for access to more information.
8. There was not as clear a preference about position of the photograph on the left or right side of the column. Quite a few liked it to the left, some to the right and many did not care. Most felt the highlighting behind it was unnecessary.
9. Respondents considered it a necessity to have printed biographical information, not just access to it online. They especially liked to see it with clear and comparable headings.
10. Respondents had a few other suggestions for the Elections Division:
- Offer special editions for the blind, those with low vision, and those who do not understand English well. They also wanted an online version for the more technically savvy voters. They did not think an online version would suffice for many voters.
 - Voters wanted links to voting records or court decisions.

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11. Overall, respondents said they are likely to continue to use the Voters' Pamphlets, and that they would appreciate seeing their input incorporated. They would like to retain as much information as possible in the printed pamphlet for ease of access and use.

Recommendations

1. Be aware that voters do rely on Voters' Pamphlets for information about the candidates and even more so for understanding of the initiatives and referenda.
 - Continue to include as much information as can possibly be displayed on paper in a readable way and without making the pamphlet too weighty.
 - Ensure that Voters' Pamphlets are mailed prior to mail-in ballots.
 - Offer an online version of the Voters' Pamphlet only as a back-up, but not as a replacement.
2. Position the Office and Term of Office at the top of the page for as many candidates as appear on that page or are running for the same office.
3. Allow the name, photograph, and party preference to stand at the head of each column with the text beginning somewhat below the party preference but possibly alongside the picture.
4. Provide clear separation for the biographical data from the personal statement, and use headings for the biographical information, so that it looks "bulleted," making the segments as comparable as possible without enforcing specificity of information included— but, perhaps, limiting the space allotted.
5. Allow freedom of expression for candidates in the personal statement but be aware that voters may appreciate a first person statement.
6. Include the "For More Information" box with the contact information at the bottom of the candidate's column, with a highlighted background.
7. Keep in mind that a slightly larger font than Sample 1 and a little white space is appealing to readers, but that they are not willing to trade off completeness of information for appearance at this point.
8. Remember that there is still reluctance or discomfort among some segments of the population to accessing information online when they need to know more in preparation for voting.

9. Provide alternatives to the Internet for additional information. Make it clear to readers that there is a Voter Information Hotline. List any other available sources of reliable and factual information.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Background and Purpose

The goals of this research project were to assess the needs of voters for information provided in the Secretary of State's Voters' Pamphlets and to determine effective strategies for improving the Voters' Pamphlets to encourage usage by a broader audience. The Elections Division is in the process of re-designing the pamphlets and looked to this project to provide voter preferences with regard to:

- Amount of information needed
- How it will be used
- What style of presentation will make the pamphlets easy to use
- What formats for delivery of information will be most useful.

The Elections Division contracted with Gilmore Research Group to obtain unbiased feedback from constituents about the efficacy of their efforts.

Respondent Profile

The profile table summarizes the responses that participants gave when they were screened by telephone.

Geographically, slightly more than half of the respondents represented Pierce County and slightly less than half represented Yakima County.

There was a good distribution of age among respondents from 19 to 80 years old. The majority were evenly spread among the 21- to 74-year-olds.

Almost all participants had voted in the 2008 presidential election and all were registered to vote.

More than three-quarters of the respondents reported having some college education and almost one-fifth had attended some graduate school.

About four-fifths of respondents were Caucasian, and the others represented Asian, Hispanic, African-American, and mixed ethnicities. All said their primary language was English.

In terms of income, almost a fifth of the respondents had household incomes under \$25,000 annually. About half had household incomes ranging from \$25,000 to \$75,000. Just under a third of respondents reported their household income as more than \$75,000.

There was a good balance of gender in the focus groups with almost half being male participants and slightly more than half being female.

Profile of Group Participants			
	Total	Group 1 & 2	Group 3 & 4
City / Area			
Tacoma	22	22	-
Yakima	20	-	20
Age			
18 to 20 years	2	0	2
21 to 34 years	12	8	4
35 to 54 years	11	6	5
55 to 74 years	12	5	7
75 + years	5	3	2
Education			
Less than High School	2	1	1
High School Grad/GED	7	3	4
Some College/Trade School	13	7	6
College Graduate	12	6	6
Beyond College	8	5	3
Ethnicity			
White/Caucasian	34	18	16
Black/African American	1	1	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2	1
Hispanic or Latina	2	0	2
Native American/Alaskan	0	0	0
Other	2	1	1
Primary Language			
English	42	22	20
Other	0	0	0
Household Income			
Under \$25K	8	4	4
\$25K to \$45K	11	5	6
\$45K to \$75K	9	7	2
\$75K or more	13	6	7
Refused	1	0	1
Gender			
Male	20	9	11
Female	22	13	9

Recall of Last Election/How Voters Prepared

Quite a few focus group respondents mentioned spontaneously that they had read the Voters' Pamphlet in preparation for past elections. They also mentioned a number of other ways that they prepared to vote. Many mentioned talking with spouses, family or friends as a way of sorting out their positions on candidates and issues before they voted. Students were likely to mention discussions at school either in class or among friends.

Respondents said they watched/listened to the national and local media (TV/radio) for information about the candidates and other items on the ballot. Several mentioned following the debates. At least one person in every group said they read the newspaper and three in one group named the Tacoma News Tribune:

“I don't always agree with the Tacoma News Tribune, but they usually do a really good job of listing information about every candidate and saying here's who we recommend and here's why we recommend them.”

“I agree. I go to the TNT, not for their opinion, but for their research. I don't always agree with them, but at least I can read an educated opinion as opposed to just a description.”

One respondent said she reads magazines for information about national candidates.

Many of the respondents referred to the Internet as their source for information about people or items on the ballot. One website came up in at least two groups as a place to check on information about candidates: Factcheck.org. One person suggested that it would be nice if there was a link to it in the Voters' Pamphlet, so that one could check the information. A couple of the younger participants indicated that they discuss the political candidates and issues online with friends through Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Some also mentioned blogs and forums as a way to access informative political discussion.

A number of respondents said they look at the direct mail ads for candidates and mail regarding issues or that they see information about them on TV. Some said they study the direct mail pieces, while others give them a more cursory glance.

A few have personal knowledge about the candidates either through meeting them or knowing someone who works in government or the legal arena. Several said they have attended town hall meetings or gone to the caucuses. A small number of respondents indicated that they were influenced by information they received either from their unions or their churches.

Photographs of the easel sheets for each group that listed the ways respondents mentioned accessing information to prepare for voting are included in the Appendix.

Unaided Recall of Voters' Pamphlets and Usage

Virtually everyone in these focus group sessions was aware of the Voters' Pamphlets published by the State. Most respondents indicated that they read them, at least to some extent; some scanning for important information and others reading parts of the pamphlet more than once. Only one voter remembered receiving one but said he never opened it. Another voter said that he and his wife did not receive one in the mail, but he went to his mother's house to read hers. A few respondents in Yakima said they received theirs late, after they had voted by mail.

Many of the respondents seemed to know that the Voters' Pamphlets come from a State office even though they are distributed by county. When asked, some respondents thought the Voters' Pamphlets were put together by the Auditor's Office and others knew that they come from the Office of the Secretary of State. When asked who actually writes the pamphlets, respondents suggested that the Secretary of State's office writes some of it and that the candidates, committees or initiative promoters present their own material to some extent (especially statements). Many were not sure who writes the rest of it. It seemed there was a lack of clarity about authorship—who provides which information and whether it is edited either for verity or for grammar and spelling.

When voters in these focus groups described how they use the pamphlets, there were generally two main styles:

- Some use the pamphlets right away when received as a starting point for further research:
“I use it as a starting point for my decision making. ... I use it as a starting point to figure out what applies to me, to weed out the crazies, and I use it as a starting point for my research to decide who I'm going to vote for.”
- Others wait till they vote and then sit down with their ballots and possibly other family members to decide about their votes as they read the pamphlet:
“My wife and I get the Voters' Pamphlet and we find a time to sit down together and then we have our ballots and we go over it all at one time and decide and vote.”

Some respondents said they skim the Voters' Pamphlets when they first get them and then read certain parts more intently when they are making a decision. In many cases, respondents alluded to other sources of information about candidates, but they were more likely to read about the initiatives, referenda, and bond issues in the Voters' Pamphlet, because it seemed more difficult to decide which way to vote for those issues.

Priority of Information in Voters' Pamphlet (Card Sort)

Respondents were asked to perform an exercise to determine their priorities among the types of information that might be included as part of a candidate description in their Voters' Pamphlets, to determine what is necessary versus what would be "nice to have." Each respondent was given an envelope with a set of small cards, each of which named one type of information (listed in the table below) along with an example of that type of information. Once they had put their items (cards) in order, they recorded the order on a sheet of paper that listed all of the components alphabetically. The first was most important to the respondent and the 13th least important. The following table shows the overall rank and mean score for each item.

Card Sort Rank by Mean Score		
1	Office Running For	2.9
2	Candidate's Name	3.1
3	Party Preference	5.0
4	Elected Experience	5.1
5	Personal Statement	6.6
6	Education	6.9
7	Current Employment	7.6
8	Professional Photograph	7.7
9	Term Length	7.9
10	Other Professional Experience	7.9
11	Endorsements	8.1
12	Family Status	10.1
13	Address (campaign, email, web)	10.3

Most respondents were conscientious about ranking the items according to what they found most necessary to know, although some acknowledged that they ordered them as they would expect to find them or would like to see the information on a page, so that their rankings reflected more of a visual preference.

Office for which the Candidate is Running

Knowing which office is under consideration appeared to be a starting point for most voters' consideration of the candidates. It was observed that the office is usually the title of the page or the header at the top of the page for each section, so that one knows where to look in the Voters' Pamphlet for that part of the election. One person pointed out:

"The ballots are organized by office, so it makes sense for the pamphlets to be organized by office."

The office provides a context for evaluating the other information listed below.

Candidate's Name

Overall, the candidate's name ranked as the second most important but there was a wide range of opinion on this subject. Many said that one has to know the name of the candidate in order to vote. Others ranked it lower, meaning that it was unimportant because it doesn't matter what the name is, if the person is a good candidate for the job. In between those two positions were those who thought the name would tell them something about the person. For instance, the name Obama came up frequently as an example, either as a name that sounds foreign (negative perception) or as a name that shows the diversity our country embraces (positive perception).

Party Preference

Party preference ranked third overall. Party affiliation would, in some cases, influence whether or not the voter was interested in reading that candidate's information. Most thought the party preference would be indicative of the platform that they represent:

“Cause that [party preference] usually tends to tell you how they vote on things.”

“And also which party controls their vote.”

“I vote primarily on a certain platform and I want to know what their affiliation is with that.”

However, a few said they would need more information to know whether the candidate leans to the left or right even with the party preference stated.

Elected Experience

Elected experience was fourth most important of the types of information ranked. The more experience in office a candidate has, the more the voting public might know how he or she performed. Information in the pamphlet about what elected offices the candidate held previously was expected to show how much confidence the public had in that person to elect them to other offices. Respondents would look at the types of positions held in the past to evaluate whether the experience related to or would contribute to the candidate's ability to carry out the duties of the office for which he or she was currently running.

Personal Statement

Many ranked the personal statement high to mid-range, so that this item placed fifth in importance. The value perceived by those who find personal statements relatively important is that they show how the candidates think, what they choose to show as their strengths in the past and what their planned agendas are, if elected. These statements give the voter insight into what the candidate is about.

On the other hand, some respondents equate the personal statement with a lot of verbiage that may or may not hold true:

“It’s typically not written by the candidate, but by the candidate’s campaign manager. And it’s all happy news.”

“I put it in the same category as the stuff that comes in the mail.”

“There you go.”

“I’m so skeptical of it....To me it’s all fluff. It doesn’t matter what party they’re from.”

At least, the majority of respondents seemed to recognize the statement as something the candidate would want to have known about him or herself. The omissions or the slant of the statement might influence the voter as much as the facts it purports.

Education

The candidate’s education seemed relatively important to the majority of voters in these focus groups (ranked sixth overall, so in the upper half of the list). Respondents acknowledged that older politicians may have trained on the job in their careers and elected positions, but that for younger candidates, it is more likely that they have gone through some form of higher education at this point:

“It’s kind of wise if you have gone to college, instead of just graduated from high school these days. Experience is a lot, but I think you also should have gone to school and graduate school.”

There were some who were not so concerned about the education as long as the experience and the record of accomplishments offset the potential lack of higher education, as this Yakima respondent stated:

“A lot of times, people can go to like sixteen years of college and be a perfect idiot and other people that don’t even graduate from high school are multi-millionaires. And so I think that the education or where you are educated, it doesn’t really matter as much as what you’re doing right now.”

It was pointed out that some political candidates may pad their education section with claims that are not entirely true. Several wished that the editors of the Voters’ Pamphlets could verify the facts submitted by candidates.

Current Employment

Current employment ranked lower than elected experience or education, but it was considered indicative of what the candidate could accomplish. It was perceived as more important information if the candidate did not have elected office experience. It would also be a way to find out what current elected office position he/she held or, if none, what type

of work the candidate was doing and how it might relate to the office to which he/she aspired.

Professional Photograph

There were extremes of opinion about whether a photograph of the candidate was important or not. Some felt that it was a given to have a photograph along with the name, just as one frequently finds in a resume or as a part of other forms of identification. Others said they needed a visual image and that it was natural to want to put a face to a name.

“It’s kind of funny how we are conditioned to have a photograph, but that wasn’t the most important thing to me.”

A few said they would be influenced by the appearance of the candidate along with other information. Several in one group argued about the validity of appearances:

“If I saw a person that has a long scruffy beard and an unkempt appearance, I probably am not going to vote for him.”

“It’s whether or not they are willing to take the time to prep themselves for an interview environment.”

“There’s such a thing as a professional looking crook, too.”

Others were adamant about not wanting to be influenced by the appearance of the candidates.

“I would eliminate photographs. I put it as the last thing. It’s what they are going to do. If they are in line with what I’m looking for in that position, if it fits my needs, I don’t care if I ever see them. They can wear pajamas to work.”

“No need for the picture.”

Quite a few focus group participants put the photograph at the bottom of the list as one of the least important items but their rankings were offset by those who ranked the photograph toward the top, so that, overall, it ended up mid-range or eighth in the ranks.

Term Length

Term length ranked in the middle to low range on the chart, partly because people may already know that information or because they don’t pay much attention to it: Some of the logic behind their ranking is expressed in this discussion:

“Why would that even be on there?”

“If you are going to vote for a 4-year position versus a 2-year position, then it gives that vote a little more weight.”

“You already know that, don’t you?”

One suggestion was to include the term length along with the title of the Office for which the candidate is running at the top of the page, so that it covers both or all candidates for that office.

Other Professional Experience

Most respondents placed “other professional experience” in the middle ranges of importance. This type of information was perceived as more important if the candidate has not previously held an elected office. One person described the value of this information:

“You can see what he’s done in the past and you can know pretty much what he did, you know how long he was in there for office or whatever. You just know the experience, that’s why I put it as ‘6.’”

The mention in this section of organizations with which the candidate might be affiliated led to some skepticism about the motivation for joining the organizations or naming them as part of “other professional experience.”

“Sometimes, politicians will join organizations just to pad their resume.”

Nonetheless, this section was of some interest to readers who wanted to have an idea of the candidate’s previous experience in an industry or special interests and involvement beyond government office.

Endorsements

Endorsements were perceived as meaningful in some contexts and less so in others. Their value depended on how familiar the voters were with the entity endorsing the candidate or how closely the entity had worked with the candidate.

A number of voters thought the endorsements are not needed or inappropriate in the Voters’ Pamphlet while others thought that information would be helpful in the election of local officials. The following comments show a negative attitude toward endorsements:

“Shouldn’t be there”

“It doesn’t matter to me who endorses them”

“Not in the Voters’ Pamphlet; you’re going to get stuff from different parties and you’re going learn where their endorsements are, but in the Voters’ Pamphlet I don’t look to see who endorses them.”

In the election of such officers as fire chief or police chief, the local endorsements seemed more relevant. The voters look for endorsements of those who work with or under these offices:

“I look to see who endorses them ...like policemen or whoever. I mean if the policemen endorse them then that’s good or fire chief or whatever. If they don’t have any endorsements of the people that are surrounding them, ...to me that makes a difference.”

“If you’re running for fire chief and you’re supported by the former fire chief or the guys in the fire station, that’s kind of important, so that if they look up to you and respect you, that you’d do a good job.

Endorsements are often indicative of the candidate’s position on certain issues; for instance, abortion. In other cases, the voter might not be aware of the endorser’s stance on an issue.

“I think the endorsement is important because you know like are you pro-abortion/anti-abortion. So are they endorsed by Planned Parenthood or Christ’s Pregnancy Center? So things like that can help you know where this person is going.”

“Lots of times, the groups or the organizations that they say endorse them, I don’t know who those groups are. But if you recognize the groups that endorse them, it would make a difference.”

In other situations there may be two similar sounding organizations supporting opposing candidates.

“The only problem with that sometimes is you’ll see like on one it will say fraternal order of sheriffs and you see the police department and they’ll be for two different [candidates].

In those cases, the voter would either need to search for more information or the endorsement will not really impact the decision. Another reservation about endorsements was that they may be misleading, if the management of the organization supports the candidate but most members of the organization or the industry do not.

“They did a deal where AARP was supporting certain candidates and come to find out 70% of the people in the AARP were against what the upper echelon put in there. You got to be careful sometimes on those.”

A similar example given was that the American Medical Association might support a certain healthcare issue, but that it does not really represent what the majority of doctors think.

Family Status

Many respondents considered information about family status “nice to have,” but not too crucial, and they did not want too much of it. Respondents seemed to look for a belief

system and the stability of the marriage and the size of the candidate's family. Some thought family status information should be taken with a "grain of salt," like the personal statements, because the candidate could choose to include or omit whatever he/she wanted.

Several respondents mentioned that they liked to know the values of the candidate and family status seemed another source to be interpreted for that insight:

"I think people like to know that they have an elected official that they can connect with that maybe has kind of the same values that they do and you know you are voting for them to represent you."

"If you know the person who has the family is Christian or whatever against someone who is not, it might change voting for that person, knowing what they believe in. If they have five or six kids, you know they're not more likely to be for abortion; they have bigger families and that hits a lot of people at home (who) have kids."

"Like if you have some guy [candidate] with four kids, he's going to represent a different idea set than someone who has one kid. It can place them in categories. Someone that has the same number of kids is going to be closer to my kind of thinking."

Some seemed to equate marital stability with commitment in other areas of life such as their elected office:

"But then they can always say they are happily married to this wife, but they don't have to mention that's their sixth wife."

"It doesn't matter to me if they're divorced, but if there were ten divorces here, I'd say 'what's happening here, personal commitment? What's the story?' I tend to use the family status to date the person."

Thus, the omissions might be telling, if they come to light. On the other hand, putting unnecessary detail in the family status information was off-putting to some respondents. For example, a few thought that including the pet information in the family status was too much:

"If they include their dogs, it's a minus for me. Don't need to know about the dogs."

Overall, there was interest in the personal lives of those running for office, but most thought it should not influence one's vote as much as the experience and ideals of the candidate.

Address (campaign, email and web addresses)

Most respondents found this the least important piece of information, partly because they focused on the mailing address even though the item grouped together three types of

addresses or access to the client. They did not expect to be mailing anything to the candidate, especially not a contribution. The web address seemed the most important of the three addresses, because it was the one where the reader might find the most information about the candidate if he wanted more specifics.

“If I could clarify, their actual mailing address I put low but for a web address where I could find out more information I’d put near the top.”

The email address seemed unlikely to be used, unless one had a specific question or issue that he/she wanted to have the candidate address.

What is Missing from the Voters’ Pamphlet

There were a few suggestions for items that respondents would like to see added to the Voters’ Pamphlets:

1. Length of residence in the jurisdiction
2. Who supports the candidate financially
3. What the voting record is on key issues
4. More complete information on the judges.

The length of residence in an area was equated with familiarity with the economic conditions and values of the population.

“I think one that sparked some interest was length of time in an area, if they’re in an area and we’re voting them into a party or into the area and they’re not living here, so depending on the issue or whatever the case may be, that might be something to look at.”

Several respondents said they would like to see information about who the candidate’s top five contributors are, which is not currently reported in the Voters’ Pamphlet:

“I think it would be really good information if they could list the top five campaign contributors. You know that does become public information.”

“I second that.”

“Oh, that would be interesting.”

“That would be my second most important.”

“A very good idea! It’s on the web, but it would be good to have it on the page, too.”

The idea of including voting records in the Voters’ Pamphlets was mentioned a number of times in different focus group sessions. However, it was unclear which votes should

be included. If all the votes were included, they realized the pamphlet might be too lengthy. Some respondents seemed amenable to the idea of a link to a website that would provide voter records by candidate, so they could search out the ones they felt were important.

“How about this? What if the Voters’ Pamphlet had links that you could go to on the Internet? And then you’re not wasting all that paper.”

Almost all respondents felt they needed more information about the judges, about which they confess to know very little. Like the candidate’s voting record, the information that seemed relevant for judges was how they had decided cases in the past.

“I’d like to see more on the judges. Like this guy has released these guys and they have all committed crimes again and he keeps releasing them again. More information would be nice.”

“I think it’s really important to know more about the judges. I often don’t vote for them, because I don’t know enough about them.”

They commented that some judges’ names are listed in the pamphlet with not further information about them. It was suggested that all candidates for a judicial position be required to submit at least certain pieces of information for the pamphlet if they are to be on the ballot.

Initiatives and Referenda

Focus group participants had a somewhat negative attitude regarding initiatives, in general, which may have influenced how they viewed the presentation of information about them. Most voters said that they find the information about the initiatives or referenda in the Voters’ Pamphlet difficult to decipher. They attribute this in part to the way sponsors write some initiatives with an attempt to hide their true agenda. The following are some of the comments made or feelings expressed by respondents about initiatives:

“I know they have to have certain language because of the legal status but then they kind of need to interpret it down to everyday language of what this means to the everyday person because you know most of the time you read it, the initiatives, and it’s like that’s almost double speak here.”

“Some of those initiatives, it’s like if you vote yes, it is really a no. I read it three times to get that straight.”

“I don’t know if they (initiative sponsors) do that on purpose to confuse you.”

“Am I being tricked here, ‘cause you’re always kind of like ‘hmmm sounds good, but’ ... just really trying to do some investigation.”

A few said they look to the endorsements for an initiative to know whether they should vote for or against the measure.

Some of the aspects of the initiative and referendum information that respondents found positive were the summary of financial impacts of the bill and the statements for and against the measure with rebuttals.

“A net change in budget would be a good number. This will influence the budget by raising it or reducing it.”

Respondents spontaneously mentioned the legalese in this section. However, some explained that they knew it was the way the initiatives were written by their authors and that the full text had to be provided exactly as written.

“If the language was better, if the language was a little more simplified--like vote ‘yes’ to really vote ‘no.’... Some of the language that it’s written in is so over my head sometimes. I go to college and I read less complicated stuff than this sometimes.”

“It’s written by some lawyer.”

“It would be so much simpler if they could just write it in layman’s terms.”

These respondents seemed to think that different parts of the section on initiatives were written by different people. Some thought the originator of the initiative should identify himself/herself.

“You’ve got four different things there to look at: the full text, for/support or against [arguments], and how your vote will affect – what it’s going to change...I can’t remember how it’s worded but it’s a summary of how it’s going to affect you if you vote for it.”

“I’m not sure who writes that part [summary] but I think it’s the Secretary of State, but I’m not sure.”

“On the pros and cons, there’s also a rebuttal side too. I think it’s pretty important, at least to me. Let’s say the people writing the section for the initiative, they’re going to have their biases, which the cons will argue against, gives them a chance to see what the other party or the other side thinks.”

“I’m not sure who initiated the initiative and what group is against it. I’m not sure if that’s in there but it would be nice if you knew where it originated and where the opposition came from.”

“If it’s important enough for them to put it in, why shouldn’t they have their name there? I mean if they don’t want to put their name there or their name on it, then why should it be there? ...It would be nice to have their name and who’s against it, so you can say: ‘Am I for these people or against them?’”

When respondents were asked about having a link to the full text of an initiative or referendum on the Internet, some said they would like to see that option but that the full text would still need to be included in the Voters' Pamphlets. Many pointed out that their parents or other seniors would be unable or unlikely to seek it out on the Internet. Even some in the middle age ranges said they would not go to that effort of looking on the Internet for the full text.

The referenda that have to do with re-voting for measures that are already in place, such as school levies, were considered confusing as well. Those in favor of such levies thought the information should point out that the taxes involved are not new taxes, but just a continuation of what had been voted in previously.

Confusion about Elections/Issues

The main election-related confusion among respondents seemed to be about the issues on the ballot rather than the candidates. For the initiatives and referenda, it is clear that they feel it requires multiple readings to see through the slant of the initiative writer's description of the issue and understand the ultimate impact of voting for or against it. They did like what they thought was the State's unbiased summary of the bill.

“As far as the Voters' Pamphlet is concerned, coming out of high school, I always found it difficult to read because it always seemed that they would go back on themselves.”

“[They give] the impact of the vote, if you vote yes or no. They do it for the referendum, like the fiscal impact or what the taxes will be.”

With respect to the candidates' information, most voters seemed to make logical assumptions about who provides the information for the pamphlet, whether it is the candidate and his committee/endorsers, or the State providing factual information. However, for some, that source of the information may be a bit confusing.

A number of respondents said they would like more clarity, but could not really explain how to achieve that, other than simple language. A few would like to learn where they could get additional factual information.

Assessment of Samples

The Elections Division designed three sample pages describing two fictional candidates for the same office and from the same party. The purpose of the exercise was to determine reader preferences among the various styles of presentation, some of which were exaggerated in the samples in order to obtain feedback. Each of the three samples was distributed one after another during each focus group session.

Sample 1

The first sample showed dense information for each candidate, although the first column was not as long as the second. Overall, this format was well-liked, although there were some criticisms as well. For many respondents, this sample appeared to be similar to what they usually receive about candidates in the Voters' Pamphlets. Some thought it might be a little more information than usual.

"I liked it...I just like how it's basic."

"There's a lot of information, it's a little more than generally we get that much."

"I actually liked having it more."

"I think it's a good amount of information."

"Any more and the pamphlet would be that big (shows with hands)."

Several respondents referred to the headings in the Biographical Information section as bulleted, although there were no bullets. In any case, they felt this formatting made the text easier to read.

"Bullets to me make you focus. And you read the important part and you add information you want from that or, if it's not that important, you skip on to the next bullet point."

Although respondents liked most elements of the layout for Sample 1, a number of them did not like to see the candidate's address information at the top, and would prefer it at the bottom of the page.

"The contact information at the top is a waste of prime real estate...Start with the bio there, the important stuff."

A number of participants in the focus groups commented that Mark Eric's family information was too detailed.

"It's like one's too much and one's not enough."

"It even says when the grandchild's due in December ...It's a little much."

Several thought the State should dictate what goes into the information provided by (or on behalf of) the candidates. Another person disagreed because of the nuances of differences between candidates should provide insight into their style, personalities, and capabilities.

"I'm okay with the framework being there to provide that information. I don't think we should tell people—don't tell us about your dog. Give them the rope to hang themselves."

Sample 2

A few respondents really liked the appearance of Sample 2 because of the larger font size and the clean look. They said that it was definitely easier to read than the compact text of Sample 1.

“I like the bigger text. It’s so much easier to read. Like I wear contacts, so I like the bigger text. It’s a little less information though.”

Many were pleased to see the Statement closer to the beginning and the “For More Information” section at the bottom of the page.

“I liked the format. ‘For More Information’ is at the bottom.”

“I like the format of it, but yeah it’s definitely lacking like a lot of information... I like how it has the “For More Information with...the background color is different; it’s accented, which is nice.”

On the negative side, most respondents commented that Sample 2 was too brief, as if they were being cheated out of some information.

“It’s a little skimpy.”

“To me it looks like they are being lazy, not taking the time to do it properly. They just make it short and sweet.”

They recognized that they could go to the other sources, especially the candidate’s website for more information, but they thought that they would be unlikely to do that and they expected that most other people would not take the time or have the ability to do that.

“There’s no list of quals, no term length information, no title for Mark, no personal information...I just feel like it’s missing a lot so I would have to take my time to look it up where they say I can get more information and, then if it’s not there, I’d have to continue to look.”

“I don’t think they’re saying enough. You need more information. A lot of people don’t have a computer and, in my case, I’d have to take a hike over to the library.”

“I don’t think there is enough information. It makes you have to go online to look up something. You have to go somewhere else to find out more and I don’t like that.”

Although some of the information in the statement covered the biographical information, at least the experience, respondents found that more difficult to sort out. In part the lack of segments in the statement made it a mix of different types of information.

“I’m much more interested in qualifications than the personal statement. They can lie about what they think.”

“What I missed here was the bullet point thing. I see that a lot of information was put in here, not as extensive as this (Sample 1). To me, it doesn’t catch my eye. You have to read into it... [Sample] 2 is less pleasing to me because [Sample] 1 had the bullet form type of thing...”

Despite the visual ease of reading, the majority of respondents did not seem satisfied with the depth of Sample 2.

Sample 3

Some respondents described Sample 3 as a cross between Sample 1 and 2, because the font size was larger than in Sample 1 and smaller than in Sample 2. It also had more information than 2 and less than 1. However, some of the style differences affected respondents as well. Thus, there were positives and negatives associated with Sample 3. The text size was seen as a positive aspect of Sample 3.

“I liked it (Sample 3) better than the second sample but not as much as the first sample. This didn’t catch my eye because there’s no bold letters (headings), it just sort of flows together.”

“I like the text size too because it is okay. It’s pretty good.”

“It’s kind of between [Samples] one and two.”

“I like the layouts better, the fonts better.”

What a number of respondents noticed in both Sample 2 and Sample 3 was the use of the first person by Marc Erics in his personal statement. Many liked that style better because it seemed more personal, as if the candidate was talking to them, instead of having the campaign manager write what seemed like a sales pitch, as in Al O’Brien’s statement.

Once again, a number of respondents reacted negatively to Mark Erics’ extensive family status section. The verbiage seemed unnecessary.

“Al’s is more precise. Mark’s bio and family history just rambles.

“I like Al’s bio info better than Mark’s. I don’t care how many people show up for Thanksgiving at Mark’s ---and Debbie’s.”

The lack of headings in the biographical material for Sample 3 was another negative mentioned by a number of respondents in most of the groups.

“I like the first sample best. This (Sample 3) wasn’t bulleted or bold. I had to hunt through Mark’s to find information on his education and qualifications. I like things more concise when I’m reading a lot of election material.”

“Something that I would bring over from Sample 1 is the bolded titles that form each of the points (headings), because you are not getting congruent information [without them].”

“The bio without bullets really becomes like a statement...The bio without a framework is almost useless.”

As with the first sample, many respondents would prefer to see the address information at the bottom of the page.

“Please move the address to the bottom.”

“What would you put there then?”

“Just move everything up.”

“Do it like it was in Sample 2, have the photo on the side of the text.”

Preferences among the Three Samples

Overall, most of the respondents in all of the focus groups preferred Sample 1 due to the fullness of information included, the headings, and division of information.

Text

For text size, Sample 2 was considered easiest to read in terms of larger font. Quite a few respondents found Sample 3 just as easy to read because the font size was good, but one’s eyes don’t have to travel back and forth as often. Sample 3 was described as standard “book size” text.

“Graphically, Sample 3 looks good, and the older I get the more I appreciate the larger fonts, but by the same token with the larger fonts you can’t get as much information in as you can on Sample 1. There’s a lot more information on Sample 1. It’s just a little harder to read.”

Choice between Sample 1 and 2

With respect to the choice between Sample 1 and Sample 2, the majority preferred Sample 1 for the information it provided in spite of the fact that Sample 2 was visually easier to read. One participant summed it up this way:

“I think, if the Voters’ Pamphlet is coming to my house, I would hope that it would be Sample 1 coming to my house and not Sample 2 because I’m probably not going to take the time to go research unless it’s a serious thing to me to go look, but I would have to say the majority of people wouldn’t take the time to go and do the research. So it’s kind of ... I would think Sample 1 for my taste would be better.”

Photograph Position

Many respondents preferred to have the photographs on the right, because that gave them less importance. However, in at least one group, participants said they liked the “business card” look of having the photograph on the left and that it offered a more natural flow:

“It’s like when you meet a person, first you see their face and then you talk to them.”

The remainder did not have a preference. Most respondents said they did not see a purpose for having the highlighting behind the pictures and address information, primarily because it seemed to give that section too much weight. Others felt the highlighting was appealing.

Biographical Information

The majority of respondents preferred to have headings in the biographical section because they could scan more readily for the information they wanted. In addition, the headings, which some referred to as bulleted formatting, made it easier for the reader to compare the information about the same topic between candidates. Many had mentioned the need for headings in discussion of Sample 3, and most would prefer not to read the Voters’ Pamphlet without these headings.

Certainly, most of the respondents felt the biographical information was a necessity to have in the Voters’ Pamphlet. They had pointed out spontaneously how they missed that section in discussion of Sample 2.

Contact Information

The consensus was that the contact information should be at the bottom, because it is not immediately needed, if at all. Once they had seen Sample 2, almost everyone agreed that was the best treatment of the contact information. They thought the heading “For More Information” made sense, and that it should be after the rest of the information provided for each candidate. The rationale was that one would only be ready for more information after they had read what was offered in the pamphlet.

Changes to Card Sort Ranking

Only a few respondents indicated they would change their rankings after this discussion. One of the factors that influenced several respondents is that they had not noticed the web site or email initially, when they were thinking of the contact information. They had based the rank on the address information, which seemed unimportant, while they realized later that the email and web address might be more valuable if they needed further information.

“I missed the email address in the address. I think it’s important. I probably won’t use it but it probably should be there in case I want to.”

Likelihood to Use

Almost everyone in the focus groups said they were likely to continue using the Voters’ Pamphlets as long as they receive them in the mail before or at the same time as their mail-in ballots.

Suggestions for the Elections Division

Several suggested that there should be other options for receiving the Voters’ Pamphlet for the blind (a Braille or talking version), for those with low vision, and for those whose native language was other than English. Some would like an online version of the Voters’ Pamphlet, and others said it already exists.

A number of respondents would like to see links in the Voters’ Pamphlet to candidates’ voting records as well as links to judicial records for judges. Since many thought there never seemed to be sufficient information about the judges, a number of respondents recommended that the Elections Division require them to supply specific information for the Voters’ Pamphlet.

Overall, respondents would like to see a consistent format, so that they would know where to find the information they want and be able to compare easily between candidates with congruent information.

One or two respondents said they would like the pamphlet to be printed on better paper, but others pointed out that would make it thicker and more expensive or wasteful. Most would prefer to save trees, and many would prefer to have their taxes spent in other ways. In any case, the majority of respondents still find that it is essential to have a paper version of the Voters’ Pamphlet, because one might want to read it on the bus or at a polling place, somewhere that they would not have access to the Internet. One person suggested that Voters’ Pamphlets be made available in grocery stores so people could pick them up there if they didn’t receive one at home.

APPENDIX

The Gilmore Research Group

C10019

Discussion Guide

ELECTIONS DIVISION PAMPHLET FOCUS GROUPS AMONG VOTERS

Introduction

(Moderator introduces self, unbiased third party, and then explain)

Purpose of the Focus Group: (1 minute)

As you may already know, this discussion is sponsored by the State of Washington's Elections Division. They are charged with providing information that is useful to you in making your decisions about whom and what to vote for. We are here this evening to hear your ideas and opinions about how the Voters' Pamphlets should present information and what information you feel is crucial or just nice to have. Before we get started, let me give you a few guidelines for our discussion. Then, we'll introduce ourselves. After our brief introductions, we'll start the discussion.

Ground Rules/Disclosures: (1 minute)

Some colleagues of mine have come along to help out
Audio taping, for my purposes and for team members who couldn't be here today
Use first names only for anonymity
Can only hear one at a time; speak up at same level as I am
No right or wrong answers, want your candid opinions and suggestions
We don't identify individuals when we quote ideas, but present the information in a combined form.

Respondent Introductions: (5 minutes)

First name?
What part of this area do you live in?
How long have you lived in the area?

Warm-up (5 minutes)

Now, I'd like you to think about the last time you voted, and write down a sentence or two (for yourself) of what you remember about the process or preparing to vote (not about the candidates or issues, but the experience). (AFTER A MINUTE, ASK FOR THEM TO SAY WHAT THEY WROTE AND SAY:). I may write some notes on the easel or we'll just discuss them.

Awareness of Voters' Pamphlets (5 minutes)

What information have you received in the mail prior to the elections?

Besides the mailings from the various political organizations, have you received any information from the State or the County?

IF NOT MENTIONED, ASK ABOUT VOTER PAMPLETS / DESCRIBE BRIEFLY: “The state is required by law to print a copy of each state ballot measure and state candidate and distribute to each residence in the state.”

Have you seen those? Where do they come from? Who writes them?

Top of Mind Thoughts about Voters’ Pamphlets (15 minutes)

- Do you use Voters’ Pamphlets? If so, how?
- What do you look for?
- What are the main items you expect to find? (WRITE ON EASEL)
- What’s missing?
- What is unnecessary-overload of information?

Present List of Elements Used in Voters’ Pamphlet (20 minutes)

CARD SORT OF ELEMENTS FOR IMPORTANCE: Please put the cards in order of how important you think that information is with the most important on top, the second most important next, and so on till you get to the bottom. Then record your order on the sheet of paper that has the elements in alphabetical order. When everyone is finished, we’ll talk about why certain elements are most important to each of you. In the meantime, please don’t voice your opinions aloud.

- Candidate’s Name
- Party Preference/Affiliation
- Address (campaign, email and web address)
- Current Employment
- Education
- Elected Experience
- Other Professional Experience
- Family Status
- Personal statement
- Endorsements?
- Professional Photograph
- Office they are running for
- Term length

Do you read all of these items or some of them?

IF NOT USED BEFORE, ASK: Would you read all of these items or some?

IF SOME, ASK: Which ones?

Why is _____ most important to you? More important than _____?

What is missing from this list? What else would you like to see?

Is there anything that seems unfair? That you think is inappropriate?

Initiatives/Referenda (10 Minutes)

- Do you usually read the explanations in the Voters' Pamphlets about the initiatives or a referendum when there is one or more? All or which parts?
- How would you describe the information that is provided? (IF NOT MENTIONED, ASK about "legalese" below.)
- Some voters describe those sections as legalese? How do you feel about the way they are written?
- Is the brief statement sufficient
- Do they need to include the "full text" of the measure in the pamphlet?
 - If not, where would you read it, if you wanted to?
 - Would it be accessible enough, if it were online?
- Are statements for and against appropriate?
- Who should write those? Do you know who does?
- Should something be removed? Added?

Samples of a Pamphlet Page (20-25 minutes)

I'm going to show you some samples of how the candidates in the pamphlet might look. I'll show you them one at a time and you'll write comments about each and then we'll talk about it.

Sample 1 Write a few comments on your paper, including your first impressions and the first thing that pops out at you.

Now let's talk about it. What is the first thing that pops out?

- What do you like about this sample?
- What don't you like?

Sample 2 Same as above

Sample 3 Same as above

Now let's summarize all 3.

Looking at the **text** of all 3, which has type that is easiest to read?

Look at 1 and 2. If given the two following choices which would you prefer? [Don't give them additional options. These are the two they have.]

- More information printed in a smaller type as in Sample 1?
- Less information presented in larger type with more white space as in Sample 2?

Look at the **photographs**. Which do you prefer? Left or right? Shading or none?

Look at the **biographies**. Do you like the headings? Or could you live without headings? What if bios weren't printed and were still available online?

Look at the **contact information**. Which treatment do you prefer? Why?

Think back to the card sort. After looking at these pages, would you like to change your mind about the importance of certain information?

Summary of Likelihood to Use

- How often do you use this type of Voters' Pamphlet when you receive it in the mail?
- What do you do with it when you receive it? (Where do you put it, keep it, throw away?)
- What would make it more attractive to you?
- What would make it easier to use?

Where do you get information (7-8 minutes)

Besides the Voters' Pamphlet, where do you find out about the issues and candidates on your ballot? (WRITE ON NOTEPAD.) IF NOT MENTIONED, ASK ABOUT...

- Newspaper? IF SO, which?
- Radio/TV (News or paid announcements?)
- Family or friends?
- Mailings?
- Web site? Which?

Whom do you trust to give you voting information? (IF NOT MENTIONED, ASK ABOUT:)

- Labor organizations?
- PTA?
- Family members?
- Network news?

Summary (5 minutes)

- Is there something about elections and voting that you don't understand and that you would like to learn more about in the voters' pamphlet?
- What else do you think the Elections Division could do to provide you the information you need to vote wisely?

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR OPINIONS WITH US THIS EVENING.

Sample 1

Legislative District 1

Legislative District 1

State Representative District 1, Position 1

Al O'Brien

Prefers Democratic Party
Committee to Re-elect Al O'Brien
PO Box 198
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98055
(425) 771-2141
obcomm@comcast.net
www.alobrien.com

**Biographical Information**

Current Occupation/Employer: Washington State Representative – 1st District; Adjunct Faculty Member, Seattle University

Education: B.A. Sociology – 1974, Seattle University; M.A. Public Administration – 1976, Seattle University

Family: Two sons – Chris, 35; Mike, 32

Significant Career Experience: State Representative – 12 yrs.; Mountlake Terrace City Councilmember – 5 yrs.; Seattle Police Officer & Sergeant – 29 yrs.; Marine Corps Vietnam Combat Veteran

Statement

Senator Al O'Brien, an effective leader in the state Legislature for 10 years, listens to our concerns and then works hard to make things happen for us in Olympia. Brad is the ranking Republican member on the Senate Transportation Committee. He also serves on the Financial Institutions, Housing and Consumer Protection, and Health and Long-Term Care committees.

Even before he was elected to represent us in Olympia, Senator Benson worked to help make Spokane a better place for all families. He has served as a volunteer with United Way, Junior Achievement, Habitat for Humanity, and Hoopfest.

A former small-business owner, Senator O'Brien is a six-year U.S. Air Force veteran and a Major in the Washington Air National Guard. Brad and his wife of 22 years, Jill, have four children and a grandson.

"In everything we do in Olympia, I focus on bringing good jobs to Spokane by creating a job-friendly environment. Supporting basic public education needs is another responsibility I take very seriously. I also believe we must make state government live within its available revenue if we are to restore public trust in government. Thank you for your vote to continue serving as your state senator."

Legislative District 1

State Representative District 1, Position 2

Mark Erics

Prefers Democratic Party
Citizens to Re-Elect Mark Erics
PO Box 1406
Bothell, WA 98041
(206) 999-0004
erics4rep@comcast.net
<http://www.markerics.org>

**Biographical Information**

Current Occupation/Employer: State Representative
Education: Attended Seattle University, Bellevue C.C., Everett J.C., U.S.C., Graduate FBI National Academy, Northwest Command College, Washington State Criminal Justice Academy

Elected Experience: Two terms in the House of Representatives

Family: Married to Debbie with five daughters and two sons-in-law, (Kelly and Jeff, Jennifer and Dominic, Amanda, Angela, and Marian Erics). First grandchild due in December. We have four sisters with husbands and children and five brothers with wives and children.

Significant Career Experience: Former Bellevue Police Officer, Detective, Major Crimes/Homicide supervisor; retired Bothell Police Chief with over 30 years of law enforcement experience.

Statement

Mark Erics built a successful local business on a foundation of Spokane values: honesty, hard work, and living within a budget. Chris learned these values from his mother who raised four kids alone, working two jobs to make ends meet. Like you, Mark is frustrated that Olympia politicians pay more attention to special interests than to the needs of Spokane families. Mark Erics will fight for our fair share of State resources.

Affordable Health Care: Current politicians ignore high costs. Chris will fight big insurance and drug companies.

Good Jobs: Former Chamber President and business owner, Chris helped create new jobs. He supports targeted small business tax relief.

Quality Education: WSU Regent and parent of two Spokane school grads, Chris knows we must invest in a skilled work force. He led the fight to expand the Riverpoint campus. The incumbent consistently votes against education funding.

Demanding Transportation Accountability: Former Chair of the State Transportation Commission, Chris demanded audits and efficiency and made sure Western Washington paid for its own projects.

Protecting Children: Too many local children are victims of predators. Chris understands the fears parents face and will stiffen sentences for these crimes.

Elect Mark Erics

Leadership Makes the Difference

Sample 2

Legislative District 1

**Legislative District 1
State Representative District 2, Position 1**
Al O'Brien*Prefers Democratic Party***Statement**

Representative Al O'Brien.
A leader who works across the aisle for common sense solutions.

A retired police sergeant, Al focused on issues we care about most. He worked with members of both parties to write legislation that will make our children safer and led the way in the passage of landmark legislation that increased penalties for sex offenders.

Al O'Brien has played a part in the expansion of access to Higher Education in the First District. He also has worked for several years with senior citizens and persons with developmental disabilities on many issues.

Al O'Brien has earned our support.

For More Information

Committee to Re-elect Al O'Brien
PO Box 198, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98055
(425) 771-2141
obcomm@comcast.net; www.alobrien.com

**Mark Erics***Prefers Democratic Party***Statement**

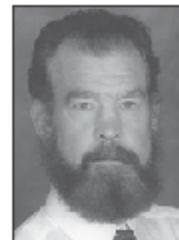
I'm Mark Erics and I have served our area as a police officer, Detective, and Police Chief for over 30 years, community volunteer, coach, and two terms as your State Representative.

In Olympia I have toughened laws on violent sex offenders and identity thieves, expanded education opportunities at UW/Cascadia Bothell, worked on fixes for our roads and highways, and passed legislation to create jobs and help small businesses in our community.

I work hard, and use life experience, common sense, and proven ability to get things done in Olympia. Please give me your support and vote.

For More Information

Citizens to Re-Elect Mark Erics
PO Box 1406, Bothell, WA 98041
(206) 999-0004
erics4rep@comcast.net; www.markerics.org



Sample 3

Legislative District 1

Legislative District 1, State Representative District 1, Position 1

Al O'Brien



Prefers Democratic Party
Committee to Re-elect Al O'Brien
PO Box 198
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98055
(425) 771-2141
obcomm@comcast.net
www.alobrien.com

Biographical Information

Washington State Representative – 1st District;
Adjunct Faculty Member, Seattle University
B.A. Sociology – 1974, Seattle University; M.A.
Public Administration – 1976, Seattle University
Two sons – Chris, 35; Mike, 32
State Representative – 12 yrs.; Mountlake Terrace
City Councilmember – 5 yrs.; Seattle Police Officer
& Sergeant – 29 yrs.; Marine Corps Vietnam
Combat Veteran

Statement

Representative Al O'Brien.

A leader who works across the aisle for common sense solutions.

A retired police sergeant, Al focused on issues we care about most. He worked with members of both parties to write legislation that will make our children safer and led the way in the passage of landmark legislation that increased penalties for sex offenders.

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Al O'Brien has earned our support.

Mark Erics



Prefers Democratic Party
Citizens to Re-Elect Mark Erics
PO Box 1406
Bothell, WA 98041
(206) 999-0004
erics4rep@comcast.net
http://www.markerics.org

Biographical Information

Attended Seattle University, Bellevue C.C., Everett J.C., U.S.C., Graduate FBI National Academy, Northwest Command College, Washington State Criminal Justice Academy

Two terms in the House of Representatives

Married to Debbie with five daughters and two sons-in-law, (Kelly and Jeff, Jennifer and Dominic, Amanda, Angela, and Marian Erics). First grandchild due in December. We have four sisters with husbands and children and five brothers with wives and children.

Former Bellevue Police Officer, Detective, Major Crimes/Homicide supervisor; retired Bothell Police Chief with over 30 years of law enforcement experience.

Statement

I'm Representative Mark Erics and I have served our area as a police officer, Detective, and Police Chief for over 30 years, community volunteer, coach, and two terms as your State Representative.

In Olympia I have toughened laws on violent sex offenders and identity thieves, expanded education opportunities at UW/Cascadia Bothell, worked on fixes for our roads and highways, and passed legislation to create jobs and help small businesses in our community.

I work hard, and use life experience, common sense, and proven ability to get things done in Olympia. Please give me your support and vote.

Group 1
 7 Voter Pamphlet
 Commercials/TV
 Party
 Discussed w/spouse
 w/friends
 Environmental > articles
 Religious
 3 Tacoma News Tribune or 1 Newspaper
 Google fact-checking web-sites
 Discussions on PBS / radio talk shows
 Facebook - discussions w/friends
 Had mind made-up

Group 1 - Tacoma

Group 2 Tacoma
 Media (radio, internet, TV)
 Pamphlet
 Talking w/other people, friends, family
 Facebook, MySpace
 Forums, Blogs
 Groups + organizations (Rotary)
 (YMCA, YWCA, Labor Council) (Academy)
 Church
 Local political parties
 Newspaper
 Post cards in mail
 Telephone, Door-to-door
 Town Hall Mtg
 Union
 Facebook.com.org

Group 2 - Tacoma

3
 || Review Candidates in Pamphlet
 - Pamphlet after ballot
 Personal Knowledge
 Talk w/ Family + Friends
 || Watch Ads on TV
 Internet
 Newspaper
 Voting Records
 Road Ballot
 Watch Debates/News

Group 3 - Yakima

4* Group - Yakima
 || Voter Pamphlet
 || Radio
 || Discussed Husb. / Friend
 / Newspaper
 || TV News
 Internet, Blogs
 News Magz - Time
 / School Discussions

Group 4 - Yakima

Screening Questionnaire for Voters' Pamphlet Focus Groups

(C10019: TACOMA 3/3, YAKIMA 3/4)

ASK FOR NAME:

Hello, this is _____ of Gilmore Research Group, an independent market research company. We are interested in hearing your opinions to see if you qualify for a focus study we will be conducting about Voters' Pamphlets. If you do qualify for this study, you will receive \$75 for your participation. I'd like to assure you that we are not selling anything; we are only interested in your opinions.

Q.1 Do you or anyone in your immediate family or household work for an advertising agency or market research company?
Yes () THANK & END
No () CONTINUE

Q.2 Are you currently registered to vote?
Yes () CONTINUE
No () THANK & END

Q.3 Did you vote in the 2008 presidential election?
Yes () CONTINUE
No () (HOLD)

Q.4 What is your zip code?

CIRCLE RESPONDENT'S ZIP CODE -- AIM FOR MIX OF ZIP CODES

TACOMA SAMPLE: 98401, 98402, 98403, 98404, 98405, 98406, 98407, 98408, 98409, 98411, 98412, 98413, 98415, 98416, 98418, 98421, 98422, 98424, 98430, 98431, 98433, 98438, 98439, 98442, 98443, 98444, 98445, 98446, 98447, 98450, 98455, 98460, 98464, 98465, 98466, 98467, 98471, 98477, 98481, 98492, 98493, 98497, 98498, 98499

YAKIMA SAMPLE: 98901, 98902, 98903, 98904, 98907, 98908, 98909

Q.5 So that we may recruit a mix of people, could you please tell me in which age bracket you fall? (WRITE AGE IF OFFERED: _____)
18-20 ()
21-34 ()
35-54 () RECRUIT A MIX
55-74 ()
75 or more ()

Q.6 And what is the highest level of school you have completed?

- Less than high school ()
 High School Graduate/GED ()
 Some College, community college or trade school () RECRUIT A MIX
 College Graduate ()
 Beyond College ()
 Refused ()
- Q.7 What is your ethnicity?
 White/ Caucasian ()
 Black/ African American ()
 Asian/ Pacific Islander () RECRUIT A MIX
 Hispanic or Latina ()
 Native American/Alaska Native ()
 OTHER: SPECIFY _____ ()
 Refused ()
- Q.8 What is the primary language spoken in your home? _____
- Q.9 And in which of the following categories would you place your total household income?
 Under \$25,000 ()
 \$25,000 to just under \$45,000 ()
 \$45,000 to just under \$75,000 () RECRUIT A MIX
 \$75,000 or more ()
 Refused ()
- Q.9 For classification purposes only, what is your current occupation or profession? _____
- Q.10 RECORD GENDER (DO NOT ASK) **Male Female**
 RECRUIT MIX OF MALE/FEMALE.

INVITATION:

We would like to invite you to take part in a focus group discussion we are conducting for people to share their opinions on information found in Voters' Pamphlets. These sessions will consist of 8-10 people sitting in a round table discussion. These discussions are usually fun and turn out to be an interesting exchange of ideas. As a thank you for giving your time and opinions you will receive \$75.00 at the group's conclusion. Does this sound like something you would like to do?

The groups will be held on _____ at the _____ The discussion will last 2 hours. I would also like to stress again that this is strictly an opinion gathering session.

SCHEDULE:**TACOMA:**

La Quinta Inn and Conference Center
 1425 East 27th St
 Tacoma WA 98421

Boardroom

Group 1- March 3, 2010 6:00pm () Group 2- March 3, 2010 8:00pm ()

YAKIMA:

Red Lion Hotel Conference Center
607 E Yakima Avenue Yakima, WA USA 98901
Veranda Room

Group 1- March 4, 2010 6:00pm () Group 2- March 4, 2010 8:00 pm ()

Will you be able to attend? Yes () → CONTINUE No () → THANK & END
CHECK SCHEDULE ON FRONT PAGE; RECORD NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate. I think you will find it very interesting. We will be sending out confirmation letters, along with an address and a map to the meeting location.

Would you prefer to have it by email or to your home address?

Mail () Email ()

IF EMAIL, ASK EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Results

Group #	First Name	Address	Cand.Name	Cur. Empl	Education	Elect Exp.	Endorsements	Family Stat	Office	Other Prof. Exp	Party Pref	Pers. State	Prof. Photo	Term length
Tacoma 1	1	13	8	6	2	1	3	9	10	5	7	4	11	12
Tacoma 1	2	13	10	5	6	4	11	12	1	7	3	9	8	2
Tacoma 1	3	11	12	10	5	8	4	9	6	3	2	1	13	7
Tacoma 1	4	7	10	8	9	1	3	11	5	4	6	2	13	12
Tacoma 1	5	12	1	11	6	7	10	5	2	8	4	9	13	3
Tacoma 1	6	11	12	10	4	1	7	8	2	3	9	5	13	6
Tacoma 1	7	13	1	6	4	5	9	10	2	7	3	8	12	11
Tacoma 1	8	13	3	1	2	4	11	10	5	6	7	9	8	12
Tacoma 1	9	13	1	6	5	7	10	11	2	9	3	4	12	8
Tacoma 1	10	13	1	7	5	8	4	10	2	6	3	12	6	11
Tacoma 1	11	10	13	4	5	2	8	9	1	6	7	3	12	11
Tacoma 2	12	11	1	9	8	5	7	13	2	10	6	3	12	4
Tacoma 2	13	5	1	6	7	8	10	12	2	11	3	4	13	14
Tacoma 2	14	4	2	11	10	1	6	12	3	8	5	7	13	9
Tacoma 2	15	12	1	6	7	5	10	11	2	13	4	3	8	9
Tacoma 2	16	12	2	11	9	4	7	13	1	10	3	8	5	6
Tacoma 2	17	6	2	12	9	7	5	10	1	11	8	4	3	13
Tacoma 2	18	13	1	5	4	3	12	8	2	6	11	9	10	7
Tacoma 2	19	12	1	10	8	7	5	11	2	6	4	9	13	3
Tacoma 2	20	13	3	4	5	2	6	7	11	10	1	8	9	12
Tacoma 2	21	9	4	6	8	7	3	13	2	10	1	5	11	12
Tacoma 2	22	13	1	10	5	4	12	8	3	11	9	7	2	6
Yakima 3	23	13	3	10	6	4	12	11	5	9	1	8	2	7
Yakima 3	24	13	1	7	5	6	10	11	2	9	3	12	8	4
Yakima 3	25	13	2	7	9	8	11	12	3	10	5	6	1	4
Yakima 3	26	13	1	9	6	7	12	8	3	10	5	11	2	4
Yakima 3	27	10	5	8	7	3	4	12	2	1	13	11	9	6
Yakima 3	28	13	2	8	11	7	10	12	4	9	5	6	1	3
Yakima 3	29	13	1	2	3	5	8	10	4	6	7	9	11	12
Yakima 3	30		1		2	3	6	7	4	5	8	1		
Yakima 4	31	12	1	7	9	5	4	8	2	6	3	10	13	11
Yakima 4	32	12	2	10	7	4	11	9	3	8	6	5	1	13
Yakima 4	33	4	1	9	10	8	13	12	3	11	6	5	2	7
Yakima 4	34	11	2	6	5	4	9	10	1	8	3	7	12	13
Yakima 4	35	13	1	6	9	4	10	11	2	7	3	8	12	5
Yakima 4	36	6	2	11	12	5	8	10	3	9	4	7	1	13
Yakima 4	37	9	3	8	10	13	11	12	1	7	6	4	5	2
Yakima 4	38	8	1	6	7	5	10	13	2	9	3	4	12	11
Yakima 4	39	3	1	11	9	6	10	13	4	7	12	14	2	5
Yakima 4	40	5	2	10	9	6	8	11	1	12	4	7	3	13
Yakima 4	41	12	6	10	11	9	8	5	4	13	1	3	2	7
Yakima 4	42	10	2	9	8			4	1	5	3	7	6	
		432	131	318	288	213	338	423	123	331	210	278	325	330
		10.29	3.12	7.57	6.86	5.07	8.05	10.07	2.93	7.88	5.00	6.62	7.74	7.86

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
f	Tacoma 1	1	clear concise, info I'd use			Too little info., wdn't call for more	Liked set-up	didn't like Eric's style info
m	Tacoma 1	2		don't need contact info on top	like address at bottom,	font cd be smaller, dislike no bio	like bio plus statement	bio needs bullets, contact info on top
m	Tacoma 1	3	incumbants		easy simple no fluff	lacking in info		business card look don't like
f	Tacoma 1	4	good picture, parallel, easy to read	family details not necessary	shorter	Is it really the same info?		Eric's bio - too much, address should not be 1st
f	Tacoma 1	5	picture, bio info, one more specific, one had yrs.	Education one no yrs.	For more info, both same place	Need bio info broken down	blocked look at top	prefer to have bio bullets instead of address info in that section
f	Tacoma 1	6		some irrelevant info	more to the point	could have a little more info.	easier to read	too much family info.
m	Tacoma 1	7	career experience valuable	address too prominent, family info too detailed, pictures too big	want factual info about the cand: top campaign donors, educ. Exp.	don't want personal statement		move contact info to bottom, eliminate statement, retain bolded titles for bio info
m	Tacoma 1	8			Like more than Sample 1		Best looking	
f	Tacoma 1	9	Difference in length and details		more brief, bigger text, just statement and contact info	no bio	text size is good, like layout of page except	contact info box is too much at top, dislike where it is.
m	Tacoma 1	10		too busy, non-comparative formatting	better order, common info in common space		Better layout, common info.	More terse bio please, address at bottom please

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
m	Tacoma 1	11	good	lot of text though	better, not as dense, so less initial judgements made	Needs biography	ties with Sample 2	Needs bio info broken down though
f	Tacoma 2	12	O'Brien's statement is generalized, broad	Eric's is more clearly stated but has a little too much personal info, that's irrelevant.	Contact info on bottom works better, Less info so need "for more info" box	Prefer to see position stated at top. Works for the computer savvy.	Layout has much of same info as Sample 1, but statements like 2 Like first person statement.	O'Brien's sounds more like sales pitch. Eric's has too much personal info on his family. With the box highlighted, picture is too much a focus.
f	Tacoma 2	13	Info I need to make educated vote. Liked longer statement and extended info.	Prefer paragraphs in order I listed (in ranking).	Like statement at the top, 1st person statement is preferable, more personal.	Prefer more detailed info as in Sample 1, 2 is too brief.	Large font size is easier to read (in 2 & 3)	Info in Sample 1 is preferable, order is less impt. Don't care where picture is.

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
f	Tacoma 2	14	Like that there's a way to contact them right at top	Prefer statements before family and educ info. Shld have parallel info on both sides and same amt of space for each category.	Prefer statements in 1st person. Overall more readable, like highlight for more info.	Al's statement written like an endorsement. Overall, less info, I want more.		Without headings, current occupation, education more difficult to compare. Prefer statement then bio, experience. No heading, so highlight drew attention to picture instead of their info.
f	Tacoma 2	15	Like the lines separating resume from statement, makes easy to see what they left out	Put office once at top, then position for each, photos too big, put contact info at bottom	Headings and contact info more clear, like shaded background, party affiliation more obvious, noticed Eric's statement written 1st person	Wish it had experience and education, etc.	Like the 1st person statement in Eric's but like the dates and ages given in O'Brien's, esp. degree dates.	Don't like contact info at top. Prefer organization of bio info as in Sample 1 with headings..

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
f	Tacoma 2	16	Layout is ok, info easy to find, line separation is nice	Headings should have same headers, address at top is not necessary	Much better, like funnel down approach, organize with flow!	lacking bios.		Missing bold heading that were helpful in Sample 1 bio. Don't like the names, too much focus on pictures, don't need address at top.
f	Tacoma 2	17	It's ok, good organization	family info on Eric a bit much.		Not enough info, like Sample 1, better organization, headings and easier to read.		Like Sample 1 best due to headings.
m	Tacoma 2	18	General info	Not enough info for me	Right to the point, good info, short & concise		Like address on top	Bio on Eric's too long.
f	Tacoma 2	19		Statements pretty corny-blah,blah, blah. Don't care about family info. Stements should be before bio.	Overall looks better, like placement of statements, like it.		Liked overall, looks good. Bio info could be 1st or statement, either ok, easy to read, fonts & sizes good, like Sample 3 best.	

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
m	Tacoma 2	20	Good appearance, good pictures, well laid out. Bio is helpful, statements concise and well written		Address is last	Too brief		O'Brien's family statement was too brief, no categories
m	Tacoma 2	21	Picture (not sure if positive or negative)	Unbalanced: different information, style		Not well defined, not enough information, too much focus on more info, website info not clear to layman	Contact info in picture box	Bio should be categorized, statement shorter
m	Tacoma 2	22	"most of it"	address		Where is the education? Looks like it is for a newscaster	This is better- has a statement	Address
m	Yakima 3	23		Verify information source	Larger type (prefer #2 to #1)			
m	Yakima 3	24	Wrong sequence, bullet from paragraph style, picture			Not a bullet form, not enough information on education, more accomplishments		

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
f	Yakima 3	25		Would like to see qualifications before address and family history	Easier to read	No list of qualifications, no term length info, no title for Mark, no personal info		AI's more precise than Mark's, Mark's bio and family history rambles,
f	Yakima 3	26	I like all things from Mark- layout, easy to read			Not enough info, no personal info, would take time to look up info		Not as easy to read, flow of info
f	Yakima 3	27	Stat parts are good, nice presentation	Too much family- keep it simple	Nice statements	Doesn't tell about qualifications	I like Mark's two statements, better photo quality than other two	too much family info
f	Yakima 3	28	Elected experience	would like indentation on each paragraph	Liked that person #2 wrote in biograph style (whereas person #1 was wrote as a review from someone else), liked the word "citizens" in the more information box rather than "committee"	Could use pro/con situation and more important info, indentation on paragraphs	Liked AI's bio info rather than Mark's, but like Mark's 1st person statement rather than AI, liked how Mark had a statement at the end rather than the sentence of AI;s	Indentation on paragraphs

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
m	Yakima 3	29	Liked how Al O'brien got to the point		Liked O'brien, no personal info, liked sample better			Mark Eric's- enough about the family- who cares, is the police work for 33 yrs important?
m	Yakima 3	30	Liked Eric's statement better	They are both running for LD #1 when they live on the West Side?		Don't like the statements from both parties. For More Info - website address .com not separated enough	Liked this better than the other two.	Mark E could use info on his family
f	Yakima 4	31		Not enough information	Format			Harder to find information, harder to scan
f	Yakima 4	32				No personal info	statements are from the candidates [but] only on 1	pictures on left, shading on pictures
f	Yakima 4	33		http:// on the right, right side is longer		Lacks info		Without heading, information seems random
m	Yakima 4	34		Didn't mention who was the incumbent		Not enough specifics as to his experience, elected, or career	Bio is good to a degree, likes narrative	Too wordy

Gender	GR #	First Name	Sample 1- like	Sample 1- dislike	Sample 2- like	Sample 2 - dislike	Sample 3 - like	Sample 3 - dislike
m	Yakima 4	35		Don't like address first (should be last), statement want at top 2#, biographical at 1#		Not as personal, it's only statement!	Nicely done, cleaner to eyes	Lacking info in 1#
f	Yakima 4	36	Simple, easy to understand, format, supplies links to get more detailed info about candidates		Stats legislative district etc. listed only once	(likes sample 1 better), not enough info	Shading in at the top	Needs lines like sample 1, seems blank, needs more info, needs bold headings
m	Yakima 4	37	ok		likes sample 2 over sample 1			Too much stuff, better than 1 but likes 2
m	Yakima 4	38	Education, experience= most important			Just political "blah blah blah" no substance, sales pitch	Nice graphics and layout of data, still has most of the substance of 1,	Statements too short, like "business card" at top
m	Yakima 4	39		Didn't like family	Contact list at bottom			Seems to be hard to read, need to separate and bold
m	Yakima 4	40	"good"		like top down to party		like picture on right	
m	Yakima 4	41	Yes			No		No
f	Yakima 4	42		Statement too long, too much unimportant info		Too skimpy, would like education, family info	I like this one best	