

# 4 union members running for 'freeholder' spots in Clark County

VANCOUVER — Four union members from Clark County are among 110 candidates vying for 15 spots as charter "freeholders" in the Nov. 5 general election.

**Jamie Hurly** is a member of the Battle Ground Education Association, where she serves on the union's Executive Board and as a building rep. Hurly is one of seven candidates running for District 2, Position 1 freeholder.

**Jim Moeller**, a state representative for District 49, is running against eight other candidates in District 3, Position 3. Moeller is a member of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5017 and works as a mental health specialist at Kaiser Permanente.

**Temple Lentz**, running in District 3, Position 4, is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, the staff union at the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5017. Lentz is the communications organizer for Local 5017. There are 12 other candidates in her race.

**Bob Carroll** is a business representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48. He is running against 12 other candidates in District 3, Position 5.

The Southwest Washington Central



**JAMIE HURLY**  
Dist. 2, Position 1



**JIM MOELLER**  
Dist. 3, Position 3



**TEMPLE LENTZ**  
Dist. 3, Position 4



**BOB CARROLL**  
Dist. 3, Position 5

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Labor Council and the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council have endorsed candidates for all 15 positions — including Lentz, Carroll, Moeller, and Hurly.

"The people who get elected freeholders are going to have a big say in what our county government will look like for the next 100 years," said Shannon Walker, president of the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council. "We have an opportunity to elect people who will work for the best, long-term interests of our county."

The state of Washington has two forms of county government. One is the statutory, or "code" county, which was set in the constitution in 1889. The other is the home rule, or "charter"

county. Washington voters amended the constitution to allow for charter counties in 1948.

As a code county, Clark County operates with three commissioners who have both policymaking and executive administrator responsibilities. (They share the executive branch with other county-wide elected officials, including assessor, auditor, clerk, and others.)

Proponents of a home rule charter say the code county form of government was fine in 1889, when Clark County's population was just 11,000. Today, however, with a population of approximately 438,000, they believe a three-person county board of commissioners has too much power.

"Charter counties give the citizens of those counties some options, some flexibility as to how they can design their county government," said Republican Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsley in a video posted on YouTube.

Six of Washington's 39 counties are home rule counties. They include King (1968), Clallam (1976), Whatcom County (1978), Pierce (1980), Snohomish (1980), and San Juan (2005) counties.

Several counties have tried, but failed, to pass home rule charters that were proposed by a board of freeholders. They include Cowlitz, Ferry, Island, Kitsap, Skamania, Spokane, Thurston, and Clark counties.

Clark County voters rejected a referendum in 1982 to approve election of freeholders for a city-county consolidation effort. In 1997, voters rejected a referendum to approve election of freeholders for a county charter. In 2000, the Board of County Commissioners referred election of 21 freeholders to voters. Fifty-two candidates filed to run. They did form a draft charter, which was placed on the 2002 general election ballot along with three alternative provisions:

- 1) Increase board of county commissioners from three to five.
- 2) Include in the charter the powers of referendum and initiative.
- 3) Have commissioners elected by district only.

The results of the election were that the charter failed (by 187 votes) and two of the three alternatives failed. The one measure that passed was election of commissioners by district only. It was approved 58.32 percent to 41.68 percent.

Last June, the Board of County

imously approved a resolution calling for the election of a 15-person Board of Freeholders to draft a home rule charter for Clark County.

On Nov. 5, voters will elect freeholders depending on what commission district they live in. There are three districts in Clark County, and each district has five positions to fill. Lentz, Carroll, and Moeller, for example, live in District 3, which is represented by Commissioner Steve Stuart. Voters represented by Commissioner Tom Mielke will vote in District 1, and voters represented by Commissioner David Madore will vote in District 2.

The elected Board of Freeholders has a deadline of Dec. 31, 2014, to come up with a draft charter. If they can't agree on a proposal, Clark County will continue as a statutory code county. If they do agree on a proposal, it will be presented to voters in 2015.

## WHAT OPTIONS DO FREEHOLDERS HAVE?

In other counties, according to Kimsley, freeholders have typically increased the number of commissioners, changed elections from countywide to districts, modeled government after the state model — with a separate branch of government to create checks and balances, sharing power between the executive branch and legislative branch, whether offices are partisan or nonpartisan, and initiative and referendum powers at the county level.

"This is an incredible opportunity for Clark County — to be in a position to create what we want our local government to look like," Lentz said. "Right now we're dealing with a government from the 1800s."

Carroll, a 35-year member of the IBEW, said he put his hat into the ring after watching "too much partisanship" take over the county council. "I'm disturbed by what I see happening in the county. There is too much partisanship, too much turmoil," he said.

Hurly and others are concerned that some candidates running for freeholder would like nothing better than to keep the county's government the way it is.

"It's ludicrous that a county of this size has only three commissioners," Hurly said. The social studies and world history teacher would like to see the county commission expanded.

The following freeholders have been endorsed by the Southwest Washington

## What is a freeholder?

Freeholder is an old-world term that once referred to ownership of a "clear estate." This meant a person truly owned a piece of property, free of others, for as long as they wanted, and ownership would not revert to anyone else (as opposed to the renting or leasing of property). This status allowed those men (not women) to vote or serve in elected office.

However, this old-world meaning has no relevance to county freeholders in Washington since property ownership is not required to run for office.

Rather, freeholder is just a term that is used, and the only two requirements to be a freeholder are to be a registered voter and a resident in the county for a minimum five-year period preceding the election.

There can be as many as 25 freeholders elected to a Board of Freeholders or as few as 15, and they must equitably represent the county's population.

Freeholders are unpaid volunteers who have a singular, constitutionally mandated duty: to write the home rule charter and propose it to the countywide electorate. Freeholders are essentially a branch of county government while in existence, so all freeholder meetings must be noticed and held as an open public meeting. Likewise, freeholder records are public records.

*(Editor's Note: This information is from "County Charter and Freeholders Explained," by Kelly Sills, Clark County's economic development director.)*

Central Labor Council and the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council:

### DISTRICT 1

- Position 1 — *Morris Foutch*
- Position 2 — *Tom Lawrence*
- Position 3 — *Rob Lutz*
- Position 4 — *Steve Foster*
- Position 5 — *Patricia Reyes*

### DISTRICT 2

- Position 1 — *Jamie Hurly*
- Position 2 — *Lloyd Halverson*
- Position 3 — *Judie Stanton*
- Position 4 — *Paul Dennis*
- Position 5 — *Tony McMigas*

### DISTRICT 3

- Position 1 — *Pat Jollota*
- Position 2 — *Val Ogden*
- Position 3 — *Jim Moeller*
- Position 4 — *Temple Lentz*
- Position 5 — *Bob Carroll*



**Sharon Maynard**  
• Social Security Disability



**Nelson Hall**  
• Personal Injury  
• Workers Compensation

## Serious Injury and Death Cases

- Construction Injuries
- Automobile Accidents
- Medical, Dental and Legal Malpractice
- Workers' Compensation Injuries
- Social Security Claims



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