



January 18, 2008

To: Association of Washington Business Members  
From: Don C. Brunell, President  
Subject: 2008 Elections

As we head into 2008, we are reminded it is an election year. It will feature a hotly contested Presidential race on the national level and what appears to be the same lineup for Washington's Governor's Mansion.

It is important to remember what the Association of Washington Business's role is in the elections. We will go through a rigorous candidate endorsement process that will involve you, our members. It truly will be member driven, as it has been in past years. AWB does not have a political action committee so we do not make political contributions to candidates, but we encourage our members to do so.

Specifically regarding our endorsement process, we are planning the following activities.

1. Statewide Candidates:

- a. As in 2004, we will conduct a series of statewide office candidate interviews here at AWB. Members are encouraged to attend. They will be recorded and put on our Web site ([www.awb.org](http://www.awb.org)) for members to see. Those will be done next spring and summer in plenty of time for you to get involved in campaigns, make endorsements, and/or contributions.
- b. As in 2004, we plan a series of statewide office candidate debates at our Policy Summit on September 24-26 at the Semiahmoo Resort. The featured debate will be Thursday evening, September 25 with the Republican and Democrat candidates for governor.
- c. On September 26, our Board will meet at Semiahmoo to decide what candidates to endorse. For statewide offices, a 60 percent vote of the Board is necessary for an endorsement from AWB.

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2. Legislative Candidates:

a. Automatic Endorsement: Incumbent legislators with an 80 percent or better voting record with AWB over the last two years and running for the same seat will receive the Association's automatic endorsement. Incumbents with less than 80 percent will be encouraged to participate in our endorsement process.

b. Endorsement Process:

- ✚ AWB will send out a questionnaire to determine where incumbents and challengers stand on issues important to our members.
- ✚ AWB will conduct a series of local candidate interviews with incumbents and challengers in communities around our state and ALL AWB members are encouraged to participate in their local candidate interview. Many of these interviews will be conducted with our series of Regional Board meetings around the state next September.
- ✚ Recommendations from the local candidate interviews will be forwarded to AWB's Governmental Affairs Council (GAC) after the interviews are concluded. GAC will make its recommendations to our Board as well.
- ✚ On September 26 at the Semiahmoo Resort, AWB's Board will make its set of legislative endorsements. Only a simple majority is needed to endorse a legislative candidate.

3. Value of AWB Endorsement: There are several values to AWB's endorsement, which include the endorsement itself and the ability for candidates to raise funds and gather volunteers for their respective campaigns.

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4. Role of the President and Staff: Unfortunately, people do not segregate the president and staff, particularly our senior staff and governmental affairs team, from personal and AWB positions on candidates and issues. Therefore, over the last 22 years, first as vice president of governmental affairs and as president for the last 20 years, I've not endorsed candidates and asked our staff not to as well, for the following reasons:

- ✚ Foremost, if the president or AWB were to endorse or become active in a candidate's campaign, it would be construed as AWB endorsing or actively involved in the campaign. Therefore, what would be the value of conducting an endorsement process at all?
- ✚ It is the members who decide AWB's endorsements, not the President or our staff. Given my involvement with AWB now spanning about 30 years (including my service on the Board and Executive Committee while at Crown Zellerbach), I realized quickly there is a broad diversity of opinion and political alliances.
- ✚ Finally, those of us on staff realize that working at AWB means we are not as free to support candidates as we would be outside the Association. It is a part of working at AWB, because much of our political identity results from our employment at AWB. So we are careful with our recommendations and views.

To sum it all up, we have a credible endorsement process at AWB that we encourage you to participate in. Likewise, we will have some difficult choices to make because of that process. No matter how the endorsements fall, it is important that they are made fairly and in a credible way. After the elections, AWB must work with those elected to make sure we have the best possible laws and regulations to protect employers, expand job opportunities, and allow you to grow and prosper.

Thank you and please call if you have questions or concerns.