

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you special election news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, August 5, 2026.

The ballots are in. Jefferson County Proposition No. 1 – the County Parks & Rec Levy – appears to have passed, with over 62% of voters approving it. This proposition is a six-year (2027-2032) levy lid lift that creates a dedicated property tax to fund Jefferson County's parks, recreation, community centers, 4-H Youth Development Program, and Fairgrounds. These are "non-mandated" services, meaning the county has no other dedicated funding source for them.

The county faces a significant budget challenge. General Fund revenue has fallen short, partly due to a state Initiative 747 that caps annual property tax increases at 1%, an amount that has not allowed the county to keep up with rising costs. To keep these popular parks and rec services running through 2026, the county is using reserves and approving deficit spending from the General Fund. This measure creates a new property tax of \$0.21 per \$1,000 of assessed home value, to be collected for the next six years. For example, for a \$500,000 home this adds a cost of about \$8.75 per month. There may be an exemption from this cost for seniors, veterans, and disabled people. This dedicated revenue stream is expected to raise over \$2.1 million annually for 2027 and approximately \$13.3 million over the next six years.

In the District 6 US House Primary, incumbent Democrat Emily Randall will be joined on the November ballot by Republican challenger Teresa Fox.

For the state house of representatives, position 1 sees incumbent Democrat Adam Burnbaum and Republican Eric Pratt going through to the November election.

In position 2, we currently have Marcia Kelbon and Kaylee Kuehn, but it hasn't been officially called yet by the Associated Press as Patrick DePoe is fairly close behind Kuehn.

Now we turn to the *Washington State Standard* for extra context in the races for Washington state Supreme Court Justices. The incumbents, including two new appointees of Gov. Bob Ferguson, were leading after early primary voting results were reported last night. Justice Colleen Melody, who Ferguson picked late last year to finish out retiring Justice Mary Yu's term, is leading attorney Scott Edwards. Justice Theo Angelis, Ferguson's other appointee, is narrowly ahead of retired Federal Way Municipal Court Judge Dave Larson, with Thurston County Superior Court Judge Sharonda Amamilo a ways back.

In the only primary for a vacant position on the nine-member court, Mason County Superior Court Judge David Stevens leads, as King County Superior Court Judge Jaime Hawk and state appeals court Judge Mike Diaz split the vote on the left. Hawk leads Diaz by about 2%.

Chief Justice Debra Stephens, the only previously elected member of the court on the ballot, is sailing through the primary. The top two candidates for each position will compete in the Nov. 3 general election.

The general election will serve as a referendum on the future of the court, which critics feel has shifted further left in recent years. Progressives and conservatives are facing off in multiple races. The court decides on appeals from lower courts on both civil and criminal matters. It also guides the work of lower courts. For example, the justices last year slashed caseload limits for the state's overstretched public defender workforce, something that we at the Jefferson County *Beacon* have covered extensively.

The unopposed races in Jefferson County didn't bring any big write-in surprises:

- Democrat Chuck Garland will continue as our county assessor, Lauralee Kiesel as auditor, Democrat Amanda Hamilton as county clerk, Democrat James Kennedy as Prosecutor, Democrat Andy Pernsteiner as sheriff, and Democrat Stacie Prada as Treasurer.
- The race for district three county commissioners, which was only voted on by residents of that district, sees Democrat Anji Scalf and Republican Stephen T. Nieman heading to the November ballot, though there is a small chance that Democrat Jean Ball, who currently sits less than 6 percentage points behind Nieman, will make up ground as votes continue to be counted and signatures checked. This office is currently held by Greg Brotherton, who is stepping down at the end of this year. The top two candidates from the primary will be voted on by the entire county in November.
- And finally, Quilcene Fire Rescue District 2, Proposition No.1, Brinnon Fire Department District 4, Propositions 1 and 2, and the Quilcene Cemetery District No. 2, Proposition No. 1 all passed.

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM, bringing you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from jeffcobeacon.com. You can submit ideas to the *Beacon* through info@jeffcobeacon.com. This is editor Nhatt Nichols. Thanks for listening.