

Derek Sanders: Olympia Indivisible Candidate Profile

Thurston County Sheriff's Office: The Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing police services in the unincorporated areas of Thurston County and for processing orders of the court throughout the County. The Sheriff manages the County jail and all law enforcement activities.

Background and Qualifications:

Derek Sanders has been Sheriff of Thurston County since his election in 2022 and he is running for reelection. In 2022, Sanders was a deputy in the Thurston County Sheriff's Dept and he ran against the incumbent Sheriff and unseated him. Sanders prior police experience included 6 years as a deputy with Thurston County Sheriff's Dept and 2 years with Lacey Police Dept as a community service officer. Sanders became the youngest elected Thurston County sheriff at 29 years of age and also the first mixed race sheriff. He has run as a "nonpartisan independent". Derek Sanders is a graduate of Tumwater High School and has undergone about two dozen training courses in law enforcement.

Campaign Viability, Funding, and Endorsements:

- 2023 Olympia Master Builders Statesman of the Year Award
- 2024 Thurston County Realtors Citizen of the Year Award
- 2024 and 2025 Nisqually Valley "Best Elected Official" and "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" Awards
- 2025 Nisqually Valley "Person of the Year" Award
- Funding: As of 5/11/26 and per PDC, Sanders has \$54,722 and his opponent, Burton-Crow has \$36,816
- Spending: As of 5/11/26, Burton-Crow spent \$31,170 and Sanders spent \$12,871.

Endorsements: Many high profile endorsements including Lt Governor Denny Heck, US Rep Marie Gluesenkamp-Perez, State Rep Lauren Davis, Thurston County Commissioners: Mejia, Menser, and Fournier. Mayors of Thurston County cities of Lacey, Tumwater, Tenino, Bucoda, and Yelm. Multiple City Councilmembers of the mentioned cities, Tumwater Firefighters and Tumwater Police Guild. Also, over 350 individuals.

Campaign Funding Sources (Source: [Public Disclosure Commission](#), as of 05-18-2026)

As of 6/2/26, Sanders has raised \$69,135 compared to Burton-Crow's \$37,641

As of 6/2/26, Sanders has spent \$12,871 compared to Burton-Crow's \$31,170

Individual

\$53,026.56

Business

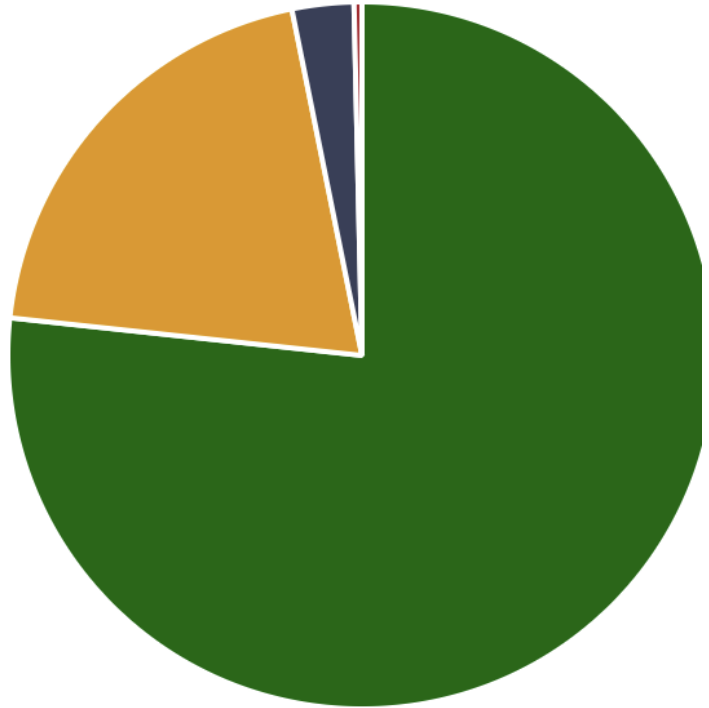
\$13,911.00

Other

\$1,948.00

Union

\$250.00

**Campaign/Values:**

Looking at Sander's term in office, his job performance may best be judged by the large number of endorsements for him from local leaders. Sander lists jail overcrowding as his most significant challenge along with the public safety issues of traffic safety, release of repeat high violent/high risk offenders, and drug use. During his tenure as sheriff, Sanders says training hours for deputies have increased by over 50% . He has hosted 5 town-hall events every fall and attends many community events as a speaker. Sanders states he has worked to increase accountability by making filing complaints easier and by having deputies use body cameras. He supports DEI values in the department and is working to create a Community Advisory Board. Under Sanders' direction, the department does not assist immigration enforcement except if there is a judge ordered warrant or court order. Sanders recently asked for his salary to be frozen as he did in 2025, stating that he felt that to take a raise when other community members were struggling would be unfair.

Derek Sanders positions on SB 5974: Certification and decertification standards for Sheriffs:

Sanders supports portions, but not all of the law. Sanders doesn't support the vetting of sheriffs by WSP and elected sheriff removal by the board and not those who elected them. Since this law is now on hold via a Judicial ruling about its constitutionality, this may be a moot point.

<https://www.sandersforsheriff.org/>