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González Excerpt from Brunner Article

Seattle City Councilmember M. Lorena González is launching a campaign for Washington state attorney general, joining a growing field of Democrats eyeing Bob Ferguson’s job in 2020.

But like other Democrats who have declared so far, González isn’t itching to challenge Ferguson in a primary. Instead, she’s preparing a candidacy in case Ferguson runs for governor — which he’s expected to do if Gov. Jay Inslee forgoes a bid for a third term.

A former civil-rights attorney first elected to the council in 2015, González plans a public-campaign announcement Thursday morning via a video message. In an interview Wednesday, she pointed to her experience growing up in Central Washington as the daughter of Mexican immigrants, saying that perspective would inform her work as the state’s top lawyer.

“I feel really strongly that this is an important moment in time for Democrats to step forward, who have the personal experiences that I have of being a woman, a person of color and the daughter of immigrant parents, who understand what’s at stake,” González said.

The Attorney General’s office “plays a really important role in defending against the rise of white nationalism we’re seeing across the country,” she said, pointing to the recent massacre at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, by a white gunman reportedly motivated by hatred of immigrants.

While the AG’s office does not typically prosecute hate crimes, González said it can assist by convening experts and making sure such cases are a priority for local jurisdictions. She also cited fighting gun violence and the Trump administration’s “brutal assaults” on the rule of law as priorities.

González joins two other Democrats who have taken steps to run for attorney general in 2020. ...They both couched their bids as “exploratory,” saying they will change their plans should Ferguson seek another term.

González is not using the same terminology, noting Washington state technically does not have exploratory campaign committees. However, like Hansen and Purcell, she praised Ferguson,

saying he's doing "a tremendous job." If Ferguson does run for another term, González said, "I would reevaluate at that point and look at all the options that are available to me."

First elected to the City Council in 2015, González was reelected by a wide margin two years later. Her current term runs through 2021. She said she'll keep doing her council work in addition to starting the statewide campaign for attorney general.

On the council, González has chaired a committee overseeing public safety, immigrant and gender-equity issues. In 2017, she shepherded sweeping legislation to bolster civilian oversight of the Seattle Police Department's internal disciplinary system.

González said her legal and political career has been driven by the experience of growing up as the daughter of immigrants, witnessing injustices including wage theft affecting migrant fruit pickers in the orchards of Central Washington. As an attorney in private practice, she represented workers in wage-theft and anti-discrimination cases.

In the mid-2000s she helped win a federal lawsuit settlement against the Brewster school district's treatment of Hispanic students, who, according to court records, were forced, with police present, to attend a meeting in a locked library where they were shamed over academic test scores and told "they were going to end up working in the orchards like [their] parents."

Before running for council, González served as legal counsel to Seattle Mayor Ed Murray. In July 2017, she became the first council member to call for Murray to consider resigning over allegations he'd sexually abused teenagers decades ago. Murray fought off those calls but resigned two months later after more allegations surfaced.