

Kelbon to run for state Senate

Candidate seeks Van De Wege's seat

By Peninsula Daily News

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Marcia Kelbon.

QUILCENE — Marcia Kelbon of Quilcene is squaring off against Rep. Mike Chapman of Port Angeles for the Senate seat now held by Kevin Van De Wege of Port Angeles during the 2024 election.

Kelbon, 64, announced her candidacy for the Legislative District 24 Senate seat on Tuesday. She filed with the state Public Disclosure Commission on Monday.

It's the latest in the political musical chairs on the North Olympic Peninsula.

Chapman, a Port Angeles Democrat now serving his fourth two-year term in the state House of Representatives, announced in July that he would run for the seat now held by Van De Wege, also a Democrat, who is seeking the state Commissioner of Public Lands seat. That seat will be vacated by Democrat Hilary Franz, who is seeking the federal 6th Congressional District seat that U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer, a Gig Harbor Democrat, is vacating.

Kelbon, a Republican, is a long-term resident of the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas and is a chemical engineer, attorney, former U.S. Navy civilian engineer, former biopharmaceutical executive and current Quilcene fire commissioner who was appointed in 2022 and elected in November.

“Washington State was a wonderful place to build a rich and rewarding life when I moved here over 40 years ago,” Kelbon said. “I was readily able to seek higher education, raise a family, educate my children, start and grow a business, and purchase and build a home.”

But she said residents' children and grandchildren, particularly on the Olympic Peninsula, do not have the same opportunities.

“Fuel and long-term care taxes reduce the reach of our dollars; too many of our children receive a sub-standard education; and drugs are rampant and our police are not empowered to keep us safe,” Kelbon said.

“Housing is also in short supply and costly, and businesses face an uphill battle,” she added.

Kelbon said she will “provide a balanced legislative voice to reduce the many regulatory, legal and economic obstacles that have been placed in the way of young people trying to build a successful life in Washington.

“I will also work to ensure that a safe and strong community is maintained to support our retirees.”

Kelbon holds bachelor's and master's degrees in chemical engineering and a law degree from the University of Washington School of Law. She formerly worked as a civilian engineer for the U.S. Navy.

She said she handled child abuse and neglect cases for the state Attorney General's office while completing her law degree, then practiced as a patent attorney protecting the inventions of entrepreneurs.

She most recently served for 19 years as a senior executive and the general counsel of a biopharmaceutical company. She said she guided the growth of that business from the start-up phase to being a publicly traded, revenue-generating company, creating approximately 250 jobs in the process.

Kelbon volunteers with East Jefferson Habitat for Humanity and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, runs a state Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway program, and has provided pro bono legal services to the North Hood Canal Chamber of Commerce, Emerald Towns Alliance and Jefferson County Fair Board.

She previously volunteered as a Girl Scout troop leader as well as North Kitsap Babe Ruth, and provided pro bono legal services to Make-A-Wish Foundation of America.

Kelbon also facilitated free pharmaceutical and investigational medicine supply for medical missions and compassionate use worldwide.

She lives with her husband of 43 years and a boxer dog on a tree farm in Quilcene. Two of her three adult children live on the Olympic Peninsula, as does a granddaughter.

For more information, go to www.electmarciakelbon.com, call 360-774-0150 or e-mail info@electmarciakelbon.com.



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