

## **Washington Lt. Governor Brad Owen**

### **1. In the area of aerospace/defense/space what is the most important issue for you?**

Sustained and increasing employment opportunities for Washington workers in the aerospace industry. There currently are more than 100,000 workers in this industry in the state of Washington. With 600 companies producing over \$36 billion in business activity, aerospace is one the most important industries in our state's economy. Although much of the industry is centered on the production of commercial and military aircraft by the Boeing Company in the Puget Sound area, a survey in 2001 determined that fifteen of Washington's 39 counties have an aircraft and parts presence. This includes five counties in Eastern Washington.

### **2. What is the first thing the next president should do to address this issue?**

The next president needs to adopt policies within his own administration and encourage Congress to enact legislation by which the United States can maintain a strong leadership position in the world. This encompasses purchasing decisions for the Department of Defense that ensure American companies can compete on a level playing field, training and education and research and development.

### **3. How important are the following issues to aerospace/defense/space interests in your state -- and why?**

#### **--Energy and environmental considerations**

Very important. One of the reasons Washington state has been able to remain competitive for all of its manufacturing segments is the availability of low-cost, publicly managed hydroelectric power. Continuing to be able to tap into that as well as pursue alternative and environmentally friendly energy sources like wind and solar is an important part of our state's future. Washington citizens prize the high quality of life, strong environmental ethic and moderate climate – that's what attracts many to move to our state.

#### **--Trade regulations and controls on technology exports**

Urgent. We need to encourage the development of policies that protects national security, but not at the expense of U.S. competitiveness in this industry. Current policies in place for decades are too restrictive and as a

result are costing U.S. jobs and are already putting us to lose our leadership position in certain industries such as aerospace in the global economy.

### **--Education, especially science, math and engineering**

Critical. Our educational system is falling further and further behind in STEM education and we are already losing our competitive edge because of it. We need to find new ways to continue to draw our best and brightest to these fields, and give educators in our high schools and universities the tools and resources they need to help us excel.

### **--Aerospace workforce**

Essential. Vocational training is a key component of our success in this industry, both on the job and through vocational educational programs within our community colleges and other schools. Rapidly changing technologies and improvements in the aerospace manufacturing processes drives the need to keep skill sets current. This encompasses training in computer skills as well as machines, tools and equipment in use on the production floor. This industry has long attracted some of our most skilled workers due to its highly competitive pay scale. It is critical to the Washington economy that our aerospace workers continue to draw a competitive, family wage.

### **--Defense funding**

Funding decisions for defense need to be made practically, efficiently and strategically. They should be based on requirements to keep our country both contemporary in its technologies at our full military might. There is a national need to fund critical defense research and development programs in aircraft, ships, cyberspace defense, and weapons and missile defense systems. There are several key military installations located in Washington state and all are in need of upgrades to maintain their effectiveness in their national defense roles. Washington state is also a center for the high tech industry and this industry plays an innovative and increasingly reliant role in our national defense. Our next president clearly has a responsibility to balance military and defense spending with social and human services needs as the taxpayer pie is only so large, but priorities need to be set in each of these areas.

### **--Manned space flight**

Crucial. Drones have their place in space exploration, but it is manned space flight that captures the hearts and imaginations of the public. With the recent success of NASA's Phoenix lander on Mars, more and more thoughts are turning to the notion of putting a human on the red planet. I have to think this will happen within the next 30 years and I hope I'm still around to witness it.

**4. Also which of the candidates – if any – have addressed these issues and what is your reaction to what they've said.**

I haven't heard any of the candidates fully articulate their views on space exploration. Hillary Clinton, whom I supported and even met during a campaign stop in Seattle, is a strong proponent of policies supporting continual human space flight. I am anxious to hear more from Barack Obama and John McCain on aerospace issues. McCain worries me because he led the fight against Boeing receiving the 767 tanker contract. I am worried that he could carry an anti-Boeing bias into the White House if he is elected and that could lead to some very hard times for Washington state.

**5. Are there any other issues in aerospace/defense/space that is of concern to you and your state? Have any of the candidates addressed them?**

Aerospace is an important part of the lives of the people in Washington state and for the United States as a whole. It is an industry worthy of our highest attention and support and the candidates need to be aware of the issues so they can be prepared to address them throughout the remainder of the presidential campaign and in preparation for office.