

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

Explanatory Note: Our endorsements (and sometimes donations) are generally made to people running for the state legislature, municipal and county offices, public utility commissioners, etc. If you are running for such an office, you may wonder why we are asking questions about state-wide or national issues. The reason is that local officeholders are tomorrow's senators, representatives and governors. Even if you have nothing of the sort in mind now, you may easily feel differently in a few years. We want to put people into the pipeline from, as Howard Dean once put it, "the Democratic wing of the party." We are old fashioned enough to think that the New Deal and the Great Society were good ideas and modern enough to be up to speed on all the latest organizing methods and apps. If you have reservations about answering any of these questions, please explain why.

Candidate Name: Bob Hasegawa
Position Sought: State Senator, 11th District
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Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes

Labor

Do you support raising state and federal minimum wages? To what level? A: Yes, \$15 + annual inflator

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier? A: the Legislature only has jurisdiction over public employees, but I'd support neutrality and card check recognition legislation as well as good faith bargaining requirements

Education

What is your opinion of high stakes testing? How would you change the way students and teachers are evaluated? A: I am opposed. We should allow teachers to teach, with adequate resources, and trust their professional evaluations of their students, i.e. grades. Teachers should be allowed access to professional development tools and peer evaluations.

What is your opinion of charter schools? A: I'm opposed. See my floor speech here: go to 1:18:30 on this link to TVW Senate Floor action 1/20/16, <http://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2016010239>

Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources? A: One of the biggest obstacles to conversion to clean energy is financing. A state bank can help overcome this obstacle. Germany has used their public banking system to finance a national conversion to renewables.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most? A: (see above) I don't have a personal "favorite." Distributed solar is probably the most desirable currently, but we need to continue R&D and keep looking for new options.

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Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform? A: I've been proselytizing on this subject for years and giving presentations all around the state. Please let me know if you'd like a presentation on a state bank.

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system? A: Comprehensive progressive tax reform. Currently, our only option to balancing the budget, absent our ability to get a 2/3 vote to raise revenue or eliminate tax exemptions, is to cut programs. (While the Eyman initiatives have been ruled unconstitutional, the Senate Republicans changed a Senate Rule that requires the 2/3 to raise revenue for the budget) We need to insure that any cuts do not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities. I will not support a budget that takes the program cutting approach. We must raise revenue from progressive sources to reshift the tax burden back onto corporations and the wealthy, who have shifted the burden onto everyone else over the past 3-1/2 decades. We need to take advantage of the current opportunity to lay the foundation for long term progressive tax reform. I have several bills to do just that. Furthermore, we need to be principled and bold around REAL REFORM by creating our own publicly owned state bank so we maintain control over taxpayer resources and reinvest them for the benefit of the people of Washington state rather than Wall Street. A state bank would help the state on both revenue and debt sides of the ledger.

Health Care/Retirement

Explain your position (for or against) Medicare for All (aka single payer health care) in terms of the effect on local citizens, service providers, and government. A: For. Universal coverage would lower the overall cost for those already paying into the system while at the same time fulfilling a human right as a member of society.

What policies do you oppose and what polices would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare? A: These are basically federal issues. That being said, we can start a state supplemental social security plan and also leverage Medicaid support from the feds by expanding ACA.

Security/Public Safety

How would you act to stop the militarization of local police forces and establish civilian oversight of law enforcement? A: We should not allow local police to receive federal military equipment donations and reform our law enforcement hiring and training policies to reduce the militaristic philosophical approach to law enforcement. Even the term is counter intuitive to community policing.

How would you preserve national security while protecting American's right to privacy? A: I am not so concerned about national security from the popular sense of that term. Our security is best insured by creating a just society. I support efforts to insulate our state from intrusive federal policies. For example, see my bill SB 5742 Preservation of Liberty Act that prevents state and local law enforcement from enforcing indefinite detention provisions of the federal NDAA.

General

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Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why? A: Yes, and yes.

What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why? A: none I know of

If this is not your first election, what other offices have you run for? If it is your first campaign, what other campaigns (candidate or issue) have you participated in? What did you learn from those campaigns? A: I am finishing my first term as State Senator, and previous to that was in the House for four terms. Election campaigns are an opportunity to build overarching community power. The most important lesson I've learned is that building community power is an ongoing task that solidifies at election time.

Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices? A: I was a Delegate to the 2012 DNC.

What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it? A: No single siloed issue motivated me unless you consider fighting for social justice as a single issue. You can see my history of bills offered and voting record to answer your second question.

Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions? A: While social justice is the high level issue, I suppose you can consider subsets of "social justice" as the next tier below, like civil rights, workers' rights, educational equity, racial, environmental, and economic justice. Any approach requires community support and involvement. Here's an example:

Perhaps I can best respond to this question by describing my work in the community to successfully pass SB 5173—Leaves of absence for matters of faith or conscience (2014). In looking for ways to support community engagement and political education in the Muslim community, we identified an issue that was both problematic and broadly mobilizing for this community — Muslims were not able to celebrate their two holiest holidays (Eids) because they follow a lunar calendar rather than the more familiar western Gregorian calendar that "official" holidays are based on. Workers faced issues in getting a day off work and students couldn't get accommodations from school to practice their faith.

Working with members of the Muslim community and legislative staff, we drafted language for proposed legislation and put a mobilization plan together to educate the community and engage them in the legislative process. I was able to get a "courtesy" hearing in the Commerce and Labor Committee, processed a concern we heard from the Chair, redrafted the language to address the concern during the interim, and was able to get the support of the Chair. The community testified and was engaged throughout this process. While the effort started with the Muslim community, we were able to broaden support throughout the process. SB 5173 was passed the following year with unanimous support from the Senate and 64-32 in the House. As far as I know, SB 5173 was the first of its kind in the nation.

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The community learned many great lessons through this process, not the least of which is that patience, persistence, and good faith effort are virtues in the legislative process. It took us a couple years to get the bill passed but in the end we'd built a beautiful coalition of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus, Native Americans and others with ethnicities and cultures from all around the world because as it turns out, many cultures celebrate various important community cornerstones that don't fall neatly into the Gregorian calendar, and the final bill applies to whatever is important to any culture or individual. The final bill allows all public employees and all students in public schools two days leave of absence for matters of faith or conscience.

We celebrated the victory as a community. The celebration opened with traditional blessings from the seven faiths listed above. We were entertained by a broad array of short cultural performances from Cambodian dancers to African vocalists to Pacific Island dancers to Chinese martial arts and a Lion and Dragon performance, and the mixed menu was provided by local ethnic restaurants, supplemented with a diversity of potluck food. It was truly a great victory and the celebration laid the foundation for next steps collaboration and community building.

If you are running in a heavily Republican area, do you have a reasonable chance at winning? If not, how do you plan to use your candidacy to build ongoing connections among local people who share progressive values? A: My overall district is purple, ranging from blue in south Seattle, to progressively more red through the district, to red in the eastern part of my District. The 11th LD voted 62% in support of the last Eyman initiative. I've been spending a lot of time throughout the District regardless of the election to build trust and confidence in my progressive message.