

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: Karen Fraser

Position Sought: Lt. Governor

Campaign Manager: Alex Hendrickson

Consultant: Dean Nielsen

Campaign Email: info@KarenFraserForLtGovernor.com

Campaign Phone: 425-345-5778 (Campaign manager)

Website: www.KarenFraserForLtGovernor.com

Campaign Address: PO Box 13380, Olympia 98508-3380

Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes

Labor

Do you support raising state and federal minimum wages? To what level?

I support the initiative developed by the State Labor Council. It is well worked and represents a good balance of the many issues involved in the varied areas of the state. I'm collecting signatures.

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

Allow unions to be formed by turning in cards signed by a sufficient number of workers.

Authorize more public employees to be unionized.

Legislation that ratifies good contracts for public employees---so people can see the tangible benefits of unions.

Legislation prohibiting management from coercing employees to attend anti-union meetings.

Having more apprenticeship programs.

Having more Project Labor Agreements.

Visible success in advocating for worker-friendly legislation.

Better enforcement of existing laws against interfering with organizing.

Education

What is your opinion of high stakes testing? How would you change the way students and teachers are evaluated?

I oppose "high stakes testing." I believe it is unfair to students. Students who have successfully completed the course of studies required by the state and their local school district should be able to graduate. It is very unfair to, in effect, ignore years of comprehensive education and hard work, and boil it all down to just a few subjects on a standardized test. Was the rest of the education worth nothing? High stakes testing creates massive, destructive stress on many students. I suspect it is a contributor to the high drop-out rate. High stakes testing puts too much demand on school personnel to extra-prepare students for them, resulting in a narrowing of the curriculum, and too much time spent on preparing for and taking tests---which would be better spent in learning.

I was the Prime Sponsor of the only bill to pass re high stakes testing, last year. It delayed the mandated biology test for two years. Actually, the statutes require passing a "science" test. But this has not been developed, so a

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“biology” test is being used instead. This is unfair to students, because I doubt that biology classes are taught exactly the same way throughout the state.

High stakes testing does not recognize the many other types of learning we want students to have during their K-12 careers, such as leadership training, development of personal responsibility, preparation for participating responsibly in democracy, interpersonal relationship skills, intercultural appreciation, civil and human rights awareness, volunteer activities, and so much more. High stakes testing does not recognize a student’s K-12 achievements in learning how to be organized, engage in hard work, work with others, and achieve goals.

I oppose basing teacher evaluations on student test scores. Students’ test scores are the result of many factors, not solely the quality of the effort of the teacher. Also, not all subjects taught result in test scores, such as art, music, PE, special education, and other subjects. Thus, if test scores are to be the basis of salary increases and promotions, this is unfair for professional advancement of teachers of classes which do not produce test scores. I voted against high stakes testing and for ending it.

I think the Legislature has gotten into too much micromanaging of teacher and principal evaluations. I voted against all of these bills. We should trust our educational institutions a little more.

What is your opinion of charter schools?

I have steadily voted “no” on them---during several legislative sessions, three times on the ballot, and twice last session. I vote “no” because our public schools are severely underfunded now, and this diversion of funds only hurts them more. For students and parents who want “alternative” schools, the public schools have an amazing array of options. We do have plenty of private schools in our state, with varying price ranges, so that is always an option, without public funding.

Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources?

Alternative Energy.

- 1) Do not allow the Clean Energy Initiative of several years ago be amended in a way that undermines its purposes. Every session, major efforts are made to weaken it. The most frequent effort is to define “hydropower” as “renewable” which would defeat the purpose of the Initiative which was to incentivize NEW sources of renewables. I have always voted “no” on these efforts.
- 2) Continue to incentivize manufacture and use of clean energy options. This can be done by extending tax breaks to some degree, and by making this a major priority in economic development grants and in the state’s economic development strategies.
- 3) Make this an important agenda item on the Lt. Governor’s Economic Development and International Trade Committee.
- 4) Continue to discourage “dirty” energy sources and incentivize their closure. I was actively engaged with the work to transition the Centralia Coal Plant, and actively supported legislation last session to assist Puget Sound Energy with the closure of Coal Strip plants in Montana. An important part of closing “dirty” plants is to have a package of programs that will help workers successfully transition to other good jobs, and will help local economies regroup. Help with environmental challenges is also necessary in order to close some plants.
- 5) Support citizen efforts to prevent Washington from becoming an “export colony” for dirty energy sources from inland.
- 6) Assure that our higher education and workforce training institutions are preparing professionals for this important work and including this in their research actions.

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- 7) Incentivize clean transportation options---for cars, trucks, construction equipment, rail, and ships.
- 8) Make it easier and less costly for homeowners to add “alternative” energy systems to their Homes.
- 9) Publicize and reward success stories.

Preventing privatization of natural resources.

There are many strenuous efforts to privatize state and locally owned public lands and the resources from them, tidelands and shorelands, water resources, river beds, fish and wildlife.

Starting with the broadest efforts, we need to oppose all “Sagebrush Rebellion” efforts---to directly convert federal public lands to private lands. Related to this, we need to oppose efforts to renegotiate State Enabling Acts---which is an effort to sell off state-owned lands. There are vigorous movements to do both of these in the arid West.

I have been heavily involved in working to prevent privatization of water resources. Water rights should remain “in trust” for the public.

We should make it nearly impossible for international water purveyors to buy local drinking water systems.

We should not sell bedlands and tidelands.

Taxpayers should get a fair market rate from those who financially benefit from resources on public lands.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most?

Change the building codes to make these more viable and effective options for residences and other buildings. In this way, more people would buy them. I tried to achieve this one year working in cooperation with an outstanding “renewable energy” builder in my District, but ran into intractable opposition from the Building Industry Association of Washington. They didn’t want anything to change.

State tools available include: grants, technical assistance, tax incentives, low interest loans.

State government could find ways to make available low interest loans both for consumers and for manufacturers, to lower cost. Universities and other research institutions should be incentivized to find ways to lower the costs of manufacturing and installing renewable energy equipment. Technological improvements should be researched and implemented. If the state enacts a Capital Gains Tax, or any other new taxes that affect renewable energy, the renewable energy component could be exempted.

Could exempt the value of a renewable energy system on a home or other building from the assessed valuation of the structure.

Strategies for encouraging local Public Improvement Districts to do more should be identified.

I am in favor of incentivizing most all types of “renewable energy”---solar, wind, geothermal, hydrogen technology. I do not count “nuclear” in the category of “renewable” as long as the nuclear waste issue is not solved. Research should continue on budding opportunities for wave and tidal energy.

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I view “renewable energy” as a source of national independence and reduction in potential military expenditures in the Mideast.

Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform?

I have supported allowing the State to “store” state funds in smaller banks and in savings and loans. The state does a degree of “banking” with some of its low interest loan programs, particularly for infrastructure.

Senator Hasegawa’s concept for a State Bank should be more thoroughly studied, so its possibilities can be more specifically evaluated.

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system?

Our tax structure is THE most regressive in the country. It is “upside down”. We need to find ways to reduce taxes on the low income and impose more on the high income. Many proposals abound: lower the sales tax and extend the sales tax to the many transactions that are exempt from it, particularly services purchased by higher income people; enact new taxes such as Governor Inslee has proposed (Capital Gains and Carbon Tax) which have a higher incidence on upper income people and profitable corporations; eliminate tax exemptions which are demonstrated to not produce jobs, some of which are quite large; lower LID and ULID charges to properties owned by modest income people and spread the balance to the remaining properties; put “claw back” provisions in tax exemptions so they have to pay them back if anticipated jobs are not produced.

I have probably voted “no” on more tax breaks than the average legislator, and I have blocked a few from coming to a vote.

In the last hours of the 2016 Legislative Session, I voted “no” on a suddenly-appearing new tax break designed to encourage just one company to locate in King County. The other two Senators in this race both voted in support of it.

An income tax is an option, but an unlikely one. It polls so very low. There is a strong cultural dislike of the income tax in Washington, just as there is a comparable cultural dislike of the sales tax in Oregon. Will the “Revolution” make this a more viable option? We’ll see. A lot of people say the federal income tax is unfair because of all the “loopholes” available through it.

It might be more fair to convert the B&O gross receipts tax to a Corporate Net Income Tax. However, profitable corporations in this state tend to fight vigorously against this.

Growth management fees could be required for many large developments, to reduce the burden on individuals for needed infrastructure.

As Lt. Governor, I would like to help achieve a broad coalition to forge a common approach that could actually pass either the Legislature or the voters.

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.

We need to find ways to assure every person gets needed health insurance. This concept appeals to me: it looks like a relatively streamlined approach to achieve this end. I have not studied it in depth.

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If as a nation we do enact Medicare for All, we need to be sure it is well funded and administered, operates in the best patient interest, and is as free of fraud as possible.

It is disturbing that many health care providers do not want to take Medicare patients, or very many Medicaid patients, because of low reimbursements. They frequently say their costs are not even covered. Washington providers get among the lowest reimbursements per procedure because of an historical anomaly. Senators Murray and Cantwell have tried to remedy this without success.

If we do enact this, we need to assure that those who want to continue with private health insurance have the opportunity to do so.

What policies do you oppose and what policies would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare?

Social Security **MUST** be retained as a federal program.

There is no reason Social Security should “go broke” as fearmongers prognosticate. Unfortunately, just the act of promoting fear begins to undermine confidence in it being there over the long run.

Raising or eliminating the “cap” on contributions would help immeasurably. The Fund should not be used as a bank account by Congress. It should be treated as state government treats retirement funds: inviolate. Some modest tweaking could also help with solvency. I chaired the joint Senate and House committees on pension policy three times and served on it for many years, so am familiar with long term actuarial strategies.

Security/Public Safety

How would you act to stop the militarization of local police forces and establish civilian oversight of law enforcement?

Encourage citizens to speak out against this to their local elected officials, who would likely respond to local embarrassment.

Could add some new procedure to the State’s methods for receiving unanticipated federal receipts. OFM administers this.

Could enact a law defining some procedure for this that has a high standards for being able to accept.

How would you preserve national security while protecting American’s right to privacy?

We need to keep the imperative for personal privacy clearly in mind as we deliberate on matters involving changing technology. We need to assure that public IT systems are sufficiently well-funded that excellent security systems are built in to protect privacy. As we debate policies on drones, police body cameras, security cameras, and more, this must be an interwoven goal.

We should be diligent in requiring a court order before engaging in searches of many types.

General

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?

Yes, I’ve been an active Democrat for decades. I and others consider me a Democrat. I’ve been elected 10 times as a Democrat.

I generally don’t like political labels. “I call them as I see them,” as the saying goes. However, when I look at lists of who is considered a “progressive” I find my values, priorities, and votes are consistent with theirs. On “scorecards” of legislative voting records, I am always among the very “progressive.”

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What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why?

None. I have read it.

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?

My election history is:

State Senate – 6 terms (ending this year)

House of Representatives – 2 terms

Thurston County Commissioner – 2 terms

Washington State Association of Counties, elected first woman President

Lacey City Council – 2 terms.

Lacey Mayor – elected by the City Council 3 times while serving 2 terms on the Council

I have participated in innumerable campaigns ---for candidates at all levels of government and for state and local ballot measures. I've held fundraisers at my home for Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell, Christine Gregoire, Supreme Court Justices, innumerable state, county, city, and special purpose district candidates. I've mentored, I've endorsed, and I've taken on many organizational roles. I have worked on Republican campaigns.

Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices?

I have been a PCO several times in Thurston County.

What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it?

The most important issue for me is my commitment to government working FOR the people. My most important responsibility is to represent and advocate for my immediate constituents and for people throughout the state, for their comprehensive, disparate, and evolving needs.

Core needs are to assure to assure a high quality of life for each person, composed of: respect and social and economic justice for each individual; a livable income with economic opportunity; equal opportunity for full participation in our state's communities; quality education and workforce training opportunities; affordable and accessible health care; a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, quality communities as our population grows; opportunities to appreciate arts, heritage, and outdoor recreation.

For dealing with this, I have been a solid supporter of expanding and enforcing civil rights, enabling people to have good jobs and income security, retired people having income security, fully funding K-12 and higher education, assuring clean air and water and reduced poisonous toxins in our environment, tightening consumer protection, expanding health care services to all, funding a decent safety net for the vulnerable, and more.

Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions?

I have been a leader on a vast variety of all these issues---passing bills and budget items, blocking them, getting gubernatorial appointments confirmed or blocked, signing letters to federal officials, introducing Floor resolutions, working with many organizations, and financially supporting many.

If you are running in a heavily Republican area, do you have a reasonable chance at winning? If not,

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how do you plan to use your candidacy to build ongoing connections among local people who share progressive values?

I'm running statewide, which has Democratic areas, Republican areas, and "swing" areas.

I believe I have a reasonable chance at winning, or I would not be in this race. I am successfully receiving excellent endorsements from many current and former statewide elected officials, current and former legislators, many local governments elected officials, advocacy leaders in many sectors of our state's life, and many organizations.

The interest in having the first woman Lt Governor is strong. I've been endorsed by Emily's List, the National Women's Political Caucus of Washington State, the Washington State National Organization for Women PAC. Endorsements of labor organizations include: Washington Federation of State Employees AFL-CIO, the Retired Public Employees Council (of the AFL-CIO), the Carpenters Union, the Ironworkers Union, Operating Engineers (school employees local), and the Washington State Nurses Association. I'm endorsed by many Democratic organizations---Districts, County organizations, 3 Democratic Women's Clubs, and the Washington State High School Democrats.

Fundraising efforts are actively under way. I have active supporters throughout the state.