

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: Kelsey Hulse

Position Sought: Thurston County Commissioner, District 2

Campaign Manager: Jessie Simmons

Consultant: Phil Gardner

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Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes, please.

Labor

Do you support raising the minimum wage in your local jurisdiction if state and federal action continues to be stalled? To what level?

Yes, I support an increase in the minimum wage (and paid sick leave). I support I-1433 and think these changes are long overdue.

I am determined to help develop paths to independence for all families in our community. A big part of developing these paths is ensuring that workers are receiving wages that will allow them to support themselves and their families. Paid sick leave helps stabilize families so that they aren't one sickness away from being unable to support themselves.

Education

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

High stakes testing fails to take into account the different ways that students learn and the different needs that they have. I am not ready to be specific about how I will influence the ways that students and teachers are evaluated. What I can say is that I believe the strength of our community is inextricably tied to the strength of our public education system. High stakes testing is not the way that we will strengthen that system to ensure a future in which all families thrive.

Environment

What can be accomplished at the local level to promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources?

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As we make choices about capital investments in local government, we have the opportunity to commit to renewable and alternative energy sources. We need to capitalize on those opportunities. We also should work with utilities in our area to encourage and incentivize adopting and incorporating the use of renewable and alternative energy sources.

Natural resources are community resources and need to stay that way. These community resources cannot be the source of the revenue we need.

Finance/Taxation

What will you do to support public banking at the local level?

Public banking is an issue that I have very little awareness of but am intrigued by. I would be interested in learning more about the goals that the Washington Progressive Caucus has for public banking in our state.

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.

My work with the Thurston County Food Bank and my volunteer work with organizations like Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services has shown me that a lack of access to healthcare destabilizes and derails individuals and families all the time. Guaranteeing healthcare for all is one way we can add strength and stability to our communities. It would have a hugely positive effect on our whole community.

Security/Public Safety

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

I would work with our local sheriff to make sure that we are adequately training deputies on tactics like conflict resolution and de-escalation. I would make sure that we are not accepting equipment from military but are making purchasing choices that assist officers in responding to the needs of our community. Lastly, I would do everything possible to help the sheriff connect his officers to the community and develop relationships that will truly add to public safety and security.

General

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

I am a Democrat and a progressive. I too believe in the goals of the New Deal and the Great Society. I believe that we are stronger together and that we live in communities in order to support one another and keep one another safe. I am committed to preserving and protecting the environment. I believe in equality and opportunity for all individuals and families in our community.

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

I agree with the platform.

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?

I volunteered for Noel Frame's campaign for the 36th LD in 2012. She is a close friend and I have learned a great deal from her about commitment to ideals and persistence in pursuit of a goal. The primary take-away from her campaign was to be strategic, persistent and to not allow yourself to become discouraged or give up.

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

No.

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

The primary issue that motivated my run for office is the need to plan for the growth that is coming to Thurston County in a way that creates paths to independence for families and preserves and protects our environment and rural and agricultural lands. This is not a simple issue and I am still collecting information and working to develop proposals to deal with this challenge. I would be interested in discussing this further with your caucus.

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

Revenue at the County level isn't a "secondary" issue but rather an issue that will affect all others. We need to evaluate the level of service expectations and how we deliver on those expectations. We cannot do the things we need to do without sufficient revenue, which currently does not exist. I have not committed to specific strategies for addressing these issues but am exploring all options for identifying and securing the revenue we need.

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?

I am running in an area with a strong democratic voter base and tradition. And, it is my goal to bring segments of the community together to work toward a shared vision of the future.