

# 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:** Jason Ritchie  
**Position Sought:** State Representative, 5<sup>th</sup> LD, Position 1  
**Campaign Manager:** Penny Miller  
**Consultant:** John Wyble, WinPower Strategies  
**Campaign Email:** jason@ritchieforwa.com  
**Campaign Phone:** 425-324-6888  
**Website:** www.ritchieforwa.com  
**Campaign Address:** P.O. Box 2165 Issaquah, WA 98027

## Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus?

**Yes. I'm a progressive and I am seeking the endorsement of the Washington State Progressive Caucus. I support progressive ideals in economic growth for our middle class, checks on corporate influence and expanding voter rights. I'll fight for a renewable resource revolution in Washington State and grow green, middle class, living wage jobs in Washington.**

## Labor

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

**I support I-1433.**

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

**I will oppose efforts to make Washington a "right to work" state as I believe unions are the best opportunity for people to grow out of poverty and make it to the middle class.**

## 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 favor letting teachers evaluate, rather than proctor and repeatedly prepare for tests. I oppose using high stakes tests taken by students as sources of evaluation for teachers.**

What is your opinion of charter schools?

**I oppose charter schools in their current configuration in Washington State. I favor innovation in education but not at the expense of our public schools.**

# Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

## Environment

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

**I believe Washington State can lead a renewable resource revolution by our legislature making this a priority. I'd favor tax incentives that give businesses the opportunity to innovate, research and develop the next generation of renewable resources, while protecting our air and water for generations to come. This leadership must start at the state legislature.**

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

**I'd favor tax incentives for businesses that are willing to innovate, research and develop the next generation of renewable resources. While I'm not a scientist, I believe wind and solar power are commonsense pathways to renewable resource independence.**

## Finance/Taxation

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

**From what I've read about current proposals, I'd support a state bank as proposed by Senator Hasegawa.**

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

**Our current tax system is regressive. I deal with it everyday in my business. There are too many opportunities for fraud and underpayment. I do not support a state income tax. I'd favor revisions to our property tax and capital gains tax to ensure our education system is fully funded and constitutionally approved.**

## 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.

**I support the Affordable Care Act. My family has personally benefited from access to healthcare via the ACA. I support a gradual, incremental path to single payer healthcare including the expansion of the Washington State Healthcare Plan.**

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

**Social Security and Medicare are federal issues; however, I support fully funding both.**

## Security/Public Safety

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

**I oppose the militarization of our local police. I oppose the reselling of surplus military hardware to local police. I would support legislation that creates civilian oversight of local police actions.**

# Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

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

**National security is not an issue for the office I'm seeking. However, I favor transparency and accountability when it comes to protecting the privacy rights of individuals. The power of the government to act against its citizens in the name of national security is a concern we must all be aware of and protect against.**

## General

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

**I consider myself a Democrat and a progressive because I believe that our government is the foundation of our democracy. I believe in equal rights for everyone and an active government to be a protector of minority rights and to check against unchallenged corporate and business interests. Our representative democracy and our elected officials are servants of the people, not corporations or businesses.**

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

**There are several points in the State Democratic Party Platform that I'd challenge. However, the one that causes me the most concern is the call for a state income tax. I do not support an income tax in Washington State. I agree that we have a regressive tax structure and my business suffers because of it but I do not believe that a state income tax is a solution I can support, nor do I believe it would be politically feasible.**

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?

**In 2014, I ran as the Democrat in the 8<sup>th</sup> CD against Republican Dave Reichert. While my campaign was not successful at the polls, I was able to build a strong volunteer and fundraising base and was able to earn the endorsement of the Washington State Progressive Caucus.**

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

**I am currently the PCO for SAM-05-2971.**

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

**I have three top priorities: establishing a constitutionally approved K-12 education funding plan, growing middle class living wage jobs by advocating and ensuring the implementing the I-1433 upon its approval by the voters and establishing a vocational training system in our state so that students who wish to pursue trades, such as carpentry, nursing, automotive repair and other trades have the benefit of real life training and experience.**

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

**Climate change is not secondary to me. However, I believe we must create a plan where Washington State is a renewable resource leader, creating new green jobs. We can protect our environment and grow middle class, living wage jobs in our state and lead the nation.**

# Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

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 the 5<sup>th</sup> LD, which is a purple district but is trending blue. We have polled recently and I'm currently tied with my opponent. I have a strong chance of winning but will need the help of organizations, like the Washington State Progressive Caucus, to reach out to voters and earn this win for the Democrats. I have received the endorsement of the following as of this date:**

**Governor Jay Inslee**

**Congressman Adam Smith**

**Congresswoman Suzan DelBene**

**State Senator Mark Mullet**

**Snoqualmie Mayor Matt Larson**

**Issaquah City Council Member Tola Marts**

**Former Issaquah Mayor Ava Frisinger**

**Former Issaquah School Board President Leslie Austin**

**King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci**

**King County Councilmember David Upthegrove**

**5th Legislative District Democrats**

**Washington Conservation Voters**

**Washington State Labor Council**

**SEIU 775**

**IAM 751**

**Washington State ATU**