

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

Explanatory Note: The Washington State Progressive Caucus supports candidates 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: *Michael Lapointe*

Position Sought: *Congress District 2*

Campaign Manager: *Bob Lewis*

Consultant:

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Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? *Yes*

Labor

Do you support raising state and federal minimum wages? *Yes* To what level? *I am the Chair of SnoCo 15Now. We are working on County and City initiatives to raise the minimum wage to \$15/Hr.*

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

Card Check legislation must be passed, obviously crucial to ensure the will of the workers is heard. 50% plus 1 means the next day the company and union sit down and negotiate a contract. Beyond that we must restore the Wagner Act to its full effectiveness. Taft-Hartley and other anti-labor amendments must be removed. The majority pro-business representatives that now constitute the NLRB must be removed and decisions by the pro-business Supreme Court must be overturned.

I will propose legislation that will penalize companies for threats against workers, violations of the law will include jail time for repeated violations particularly threats, intimidation and unwarranted firings of workers seeking union representation.

Education

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

I am against Common Core testing and the like that set unrealistic and punitive standards that penalize good teachers and arbitrarily fail students. There is no one size fits all solution in education. I am also against privatizing education through charter schools. No good can come from having an educational system where the bottom line is profits. We need to build on what works in the system we have not scrape it outright. And we need to build on our educational system with well-paid teachers whom we listen to. Who better understands the barriers to receiving a good education then those who teach and live in the community?

I must also mention that solving social and economic inequality is a big part of making our educational system work. It is amazing that with our State in violation of a court order to properly fund our schools that we have managed to maintain even this unacceptable level of an

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

educational system. The stress on thousands of homeless and below poverty level households with children, particularly worse for people of color, and the additional responsibility on teachers in this stagnant economy which has them doing far more than what their job should require is unacceptable. It is a given that we must ensure our teachers have a high level of skill and professionalism. But we need to give teachers all support necessary and hold our elected officials to account for the failings of our educational system!

What is your opinion of charter schools? *Oops! Sorry, I was not reading ahead. As stated in the prior question I am against charter schools.*

Environment

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

I am a member of the Delta 5. We blocked an oil train in Everett to draw attention to what I consider the greatest threat facing humanity, man-made climate change. As a member of Congress I would again put it all on the line. I will call for an immediate end to fossil fuel subsidies and propose legislation for a national renewable energy plan on the scale of FDR's WPA programs of the 1930's, A Green Works Progress Administration (GWPA), if you will.

Corporations do not have the right to co-op our limited natural resources. I would propose legislation limiting their ability to simply buy whatever resources they want. When it comes to deciding if Nestles gets unlimited water for their production of candy bars at the expense of a community suffering a drought, the community wins every time! And that goes double for the Fracking industry that pumps billions of gallons of toxic water into the ground every month. As with all fossil fuels, I call for an end to fracking as soon as possible in line with the progress made in transitioning to green energy solutions.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? *A neutral carbon tax is a start but not enough. Tax rebates for home owners and new construction that incorporates renewable energy solutions will be expanded and extended to encourage conversion. We will use the money previously given to Fossil fuel interests and invest in loans for startups in our communities and R&D of green energy solutions. All of the financing will flow through the Green WPA programs which will receive whatever funding necessary to address climate change and initiate solutions.*

We must discourage profiteering, share emergent technologies, and invest in innovative ideas like Solutionary Rail (<http://www.solutionaryrail.org>). The GWPA will not be run by political appointees but scientist, engineers and business people not focused on profit as the bottom line. We have no time or money to waste, as we have to act decisively to mitigate the worse consequences of climate change and little time in which to act!

We are all in this together and as a means of drawing people into this national movement to combat climate change I propose the issuing of Green Bonds, much like the War Bonds issued in WWII. I also feel we must make Climate change studies a mandatory course of study in our schools. It will unify our people much like Pearl Harbor did and lead to a national sense of purpose and a determination to succeed! And...Knowledge is Power! We must grow and nurture a sense of patriotism in our country based on a goal to protect life on our planet not patriotism

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

born by the sorrow of war, nor finding victory through the deaths of the innocent along with the tyrants.

What types of renewable energy do you favor most?

I favor all of them. I believe we need to make use of any green energy solutions we can, wind, solar, thermal, tidal, all available and suitable renewables for a location. A wide array of green energy solutions will work especially well with Solutionary Rail. It is a concept which makes use of all renewable energies and utilizes the actual rails that trains move on as a power grid. Communities along the route simply plug in, powering their towns and cities with 0% emissions.

Finance/Taxation

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

I am a huge fan of The Bank of North Dakota. It is unbelievably successful and only the lobbying efforts of the Wall Street banks have kept it from spreading across every State in the Union. Whatever legislation is necessary to facilitate the individual States ability to establish their Public Bank I will propose or support. I will seek the advice of State Senator Bob Hasegawa, a strong advocate for Public Banking in our State.

As to monetary reform, I am not quite sure what you are asking. I believe the IMF has too much power and needs reform and I am not an economist so I am unsure of the benefit of remaining on the gold standard as opposed to leaving it. But if what you are looking for is an indication of how I would reign in Wall Street that I can explain. The Banks created the housing bubble, conspired to crash our economy and thereby further increase their wealth and power to the detriment of the American people. They should be broken up; the main conspirators brought to trial and held accountable for their crimes.

Our regulatory agencies which failed so monumentally must be re-structured so that they no longer sleep with the same bankers they are tasked by the people to oversee. The Dodd-Frank Act, still not implemented and indeed now only a shell of what it was meant to be should be scraped or strengthened, but do something with it. I feel it needs to go and be replaced with Glass-Steagall, only updated for this Century. I will promote that bill vigorously!

How would you restructure the federal taxation system to address the growing problem of income inequality in America?

We need a progressive tax. The rich need to pay their fair share. Corporate welfare, subsidies and loopholes must end. Profits held offshore, estimated at 2 trillion dollars, need to be taxed. Never again should any corporation making huge profits ever get a tax rebate. I am for taxing stock trades and re-writing our tax code significantly to make it manageable and clearly written as to reflect the intent of the code and prevent manipulation for the benefit of corporations and the wealthy.

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.

Single payer is our best hope for a fair and effective health care system. Obamacare has its good points but until we remove Big Pharma and health Care insurance companies, whose only concern is profit not people from our health care system, we will never have effective health care or fair and equal access to that health care. The economic burden on the poor continues

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

and I will not rest until the most vulnerable among us receives the best care available, regardless of their income or ability to pay.

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

Of course the propaganda out there that SS is going belly up is total nonsense. But at some point decades away, SS will have to be reduced if there are no changes at all. Is there something wrong with SS? No, there is nothing wrong with social security except for the cap on it for incomes over \$118,500. Simply eliminating the cap would make sure that SS will always be there for future generations. Am I for moving the retirement age up? Absolutely not! Many people work backbreaking jobs all their life and it takes a toll on their bodies. I notice that the only ones calling for a rise in retirement age are those with 6 or 7 digit incomes who never broke a sweat in their whole career. As for Medicare it needs to be strengthened and expanded to cover all Americans. Single payer Medicare for all!

Security/Public Safety

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

Many times the trainer of local police forces is a former military man. This is a serious error. We are not in Iraq! The American people are not enemy combatants. We need traditional methods of training so law enforcement candidates learn how to properly deal with the public and de-escalate tense situations. I will support legislation that limits distribution of military grade munitions, vehicles and tactical gear with the exception of SWAT and other special law enforcement units.

Some years ago a protest was held at a Walmart where organizers informed the Bellevue police of the intent of some people to be arrested. Unfortunately about 50 officers showed up in full tactical gear. I was appalled by the sight of these officers descending like storm troopers on a friendly protest of parents with their young children carrying balloons and which included clergy and older people who were willing to face arrested to draw attention to the working conditions, low pay, lack of benefits and intimidation Walmart used against their workers seeking union representation.

There will be no police state allowed in our country. I will make sure of that!

But scenes like this, the ongoing and escalating assault on citizens, especially people of color, make clear we need civilian oversight of law enforcement in our communities. I also believe these oversight committees need to have a say in disciplinary actions against the police. I believe a federal law needs to be enacted that authorizes the creation of Civilian Oversight Committees.

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

It is clear that the NSA has overstepped its authority. I call for tighter oversight of that and other Federal Agencies and have my concerns about The Patriot Act's latest iteration, The Freedom Act. I think our fear has allowed others to lead us too far down the road towards becoming a police state. We need to take our national security seriously but not by surrendering our Constitutional rights and freedoms. I will do whatever it takes to keep our rights and freedoms intact.

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

General

Do you consider yourself a Democrat?

I consider myself the type of Democrat I recall from my youth. I have run for this office twice before and I must be honest with you, I felt abandoned by the Democratic Party we have today. We keep putting up candidates for office that can talk the talk but not walk the walk. Twice I have run as an Independent for two reasons. I wanted the people of District 2 to understand I was running to represent them all. I always made it clear to all the voters that I am a left leaning person but I was not going to dismiss them out of hand and neither would I pander to them to get their vote. I am not running for Congress to represent only Democrats.

My second reason to run as an Independent was so I could talk not as a D or R on the issues but to talk about the issues so all would give me their ear. The Left and Right are so polarized right now as soon as someone hears you are on the wrong side of the aisle, they stop listening. I was amazed by the reaction of people on the right when we really got into discussions of the issues. Obviously I didn't change many positions on a larger number of the issues, but I felt heartened that many people appreciated that I walked into "the lion's den" if you will. I know I received an unknown number of votes from the Right, simply because I took the time to seek them out and tell them I disagree.

A Democrat, am I a Democrat? I consider myself the best kind of a democrat there is, one who will stand solidly on and advance the Party platform. I seek compromise without abandoning my principles, will listen to the constituents and understand it is also my role as a Democratic Congress member to educate and legislate. I also feel it is my duty to set an example and reach out to young people in the Party. I also understand that I am human and actually may from time to time be wrong, imagine that. I can be humble and admit when I was wrong. I am not so arrogant as to hold on to a position when a strong argument is made against that position. I can be convinced to change my mind. But you better bring me that "strong" argument.

Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?

I believe it is the responsibility of the government to provide for the basic economic needs of society including providing opportunity to live a good life for all the people equally. I also believe as a progressive that I have a duty to protect our society from those who seek to subvert our government for their own benefit. Power must be used sparingly and always for the benefit of the people. Institutions and corporations must be kept in check to protect our democratic rights and freedoms.

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

I do not disagree with anything I read in the platform.

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

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 think I answered the question on what other offices I have run for before and a bit of what I learned under the question "Do you consider yourself a Democrat". I would like to get into more detail when I ask the progressive caucus for their endorsement.

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?

This is hard to answer. There are three main issues that must be dealt with, climate change (being the most urgent), Influence of money in politics, and wealth inequality. I feel that only by eliminating the unfettered influence money has in politics, can we begin to adequately address any of the other issues. We must overturn Citizens United and I call for a Constitutional Amendment declaring corporations are not people, start transitioning to green energy solutions and stop the Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement. This will be met with resistance by corporations and sadly by politicians who depend on corporate money to keep them in office.

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

There are so many important issues, education, economic and social discrimination, violence by law enforcement especially toward people of color, gun violence and social safety net and on and on it goes. I will deal with all the issues vocally and passionately. I will sponsor and co-sponsor, advance and bring the issues to the people in district 2. The people will see me when they need me and I will bring them into the fight. My term in office will be the most transparent, open and community based ever in our district. There is a need for a change in how we get our government to represent us. The time for that is now and we all have our part to play. I will do my part and the Democratic Party must also do their part. We are The "United" States of America. We have to start acting like it. It's why I run. We are the change we have been waiting for.

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 have made many connections already from my two Congressional campaigns. I am at the point where people know who I am and what I am about. Even when I ran as an Independent this last campaign, I was endorsed by the San Juan Democrats 50-0 over the Incumbent Democratic Congressman, prior to the primary and in the primary actually beat the Republican in the San Juan's. I do not want to sound arrogant but when I speak to people, in person or in front of a large group I make friends, earn peoples respect and garner their vote. I do not pander or pull punches and that may cost me a vote now and then but for every one vote I lose, I gain five. Anyone who considers themselves a progressive takes about one second to figure out I'm the

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire

guy. I will win this race against the incumbent in the general election or any Republican in the general election.

My problem in the first two campaigns is still my problem, getting Rick Larsen to debate me. I am not in the habit of talking ill about an opponent but I deserve to face him before the Party to answer questions from the people. He literally will not be in the same room as me. He has made the determination that it is safer for him to refuse to debate me than face me on the issues. He assumes I will not win or come in second in the primary. Problem solved. We all know a Republican cannot win in District 2. But this time he is wrong. I will win. I am running as a Democrat at the continued urging of my Democrat supporters. I will make my case that I am the best candidate for the office and when I garner enough votes to make it into the general election I will go head to head with Mr. Larsen and he will lose.

Let me close by saying one more thing. I am a true progressive who did not leave the Democratic Party to run as an Independent. The party left me, it left us. Many of my supporters have urged me to run as a Democrat and I have acquiesced to their request. I am running not to come back to the Party but for the party to come back to us.

We are in desperate need of a level playing field in elections. We need to weed out corporate money, political corruption and galvanize support for the Party by showing it is run by the people not a few with their own agenda. It has been shown that we can win an election by waving the party label but that will not bring needed change. We must seek out candidates who set good examples, engage youth, and bring them into leadership positions within the Party. They are the future of the Party.

Democrats need to show we can act democratically. Bring me your hard questions. You will get detailed answers to them all. But hold Rick Larsen to account also. He needs to face criticism and questioning by his constituents and opponents. That is only just and fair. It's the level playing field. It's all I have. Mr. Larsen has the deep corporate pockets. And that should not be the reason he gets elected.

I look forward to appearing before The Progressive Caucus to answer all your questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Lapointe

Democratic Congressional Candidate

WA District 2