

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: Santiago Ramos

Position Sought: U.S. Representative, 8th Congressional District

Campaign Manager: Interviewing

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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?

I signed initiative 1433. I support raising the minimum wage both in the State and in the Country. I believe that metropolitan communities can increase the minimum wage to a higher level than rural communities.

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

I would work in getting The Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act passed in Congress. This Act would give workers the right to go to court and get compensated if they are fired by their employer for union activity. It would also provide an avenue for illegally fired employees to get reinstated quickly. I applaud Sen. Murray on her efforts and I want to be a partner in House.

Education

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

I believe that there are alternatives to measure student’s academic success. I support the ESSA which allows the states and local districts to audit their existing assessment systems to reduce ineffective or redundant tests, apply for a grant to develop an alternative state assessment system. I think we need to limit the amount of testing as a percentage of the school year, we must allowed teachers to teach.

What is your opinion of charter schools?

Not a fan of charter schools.

Environment

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

Solar power is significantly more expensive than electricity from fossil fuels in most regions of the country. We need to increase U.S. solar generating capacity while simultaneously scaling up manufacturing to drive down costs. As your congressman I will promote expanding manufacturing of solar technologies here in the 8th District to bring jobs to our region.

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

I believe that we must nurture the growing renewable energy industry with tax breaks for the producer and the consumer so that it can reach a point that is competitive. I support solar, wind and tidal energy. Tidal power has potential for future electricity generation. Tides are more predictable than wind energy and solar power.

Finance/Taxation

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

I support the public bank that State Sen. Hasewaga is proposing. I think we can expand on this model.

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

I believe our tax code is overly complex and confusing. I am committed to working in manner to bring our nation's tax policies into the 21st century.

Comprehensive tax reform is about fairness for all Americans, and is necessary to give American families and businesses the ability to plan for the future. Tax policy should support growing the middle class and creating sustained, long-term growth. We need to eliminate inefficient and unfair tax breaks and subsidies that don't make sense.

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 ACA, I think it need fixes. I would like to work towards a single payer system. We need to take the profit out of people health. We cannot do it overnight, the effect on the economy and the services provided would be negative. I believe that the population overall would benefit from a single payer system.

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

I believe we need to scrap the cap on Social Security. We made a promise to our seniors and I will keep that promise. We need to strengthen Social Security so that it continues to be more than a safety net. I do not favor privatizing it.

Security/Public Safety

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

We need to look at reforms, with community activist input, like deemphasizing police enforcing of Broken Window Policing, have community oversight of police with the creation of civilian oversight panels. We need to discuss police force polices with collaboration from the community and the police.

Congress can increase funds for special investigations. Review the training the police force gets, and focus the training on de-escalation techniques. We need to end the militarization of our police forces. The federal government needs to stop giving police department's surplus military weaponry.

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

I believe that the government's collection of data is an invasion of privacy. We need to have the government be transparent and accountable. We need to know what the information is being used for. We cannot give away our freedoms in the name of national security. We can have both as long as we have due process. The 4th amendment to the constitution guarantees no searches and warrants shall be issue "but upon probable cause".

General

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

Yes I am Democrat. I am realizing that I am more progressive than I gave myself credit. I support the party platform and the values that the Democratic Party has. The Democrats are inclusive and look ahead.

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

None

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?

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I ran for an open seat in the State House in the 48th LD of when I was 25 back in 2006. It was an eye opening race, I learn a lot and I enjoyed talking to people and find ways to help.

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

Yes I am a PCO and I was the Chair of the 48th LD and I am currently the State Committeeman from the 48th LD.

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

Standing up for the people who are not represented by the current Congressman. We need to a Congressman that stands for the middle class and our values.

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

There were many factors including the rise of Donald Trump. His tone, offensive language towards many groups. I noticed that no one had step up to challenge Dave Reichert, so I looked into the race and spoke with people from the 8th CD and decided to take on this fight. I know it will be an uphill battle but I am ready and willing to do it. We have an opportunity to send a fresh perspective to DC. I am hardworking, a small business owner, bilingual Hispanic American and a concerned taxpayer with strong values just like you. As your representative, I will work with my colleagues to find common ground so we can improve our economy, the environment, our infrastructure, and pass comprehensive immigration reform. I grew up in this state and I understand the concerns of the community and I want to serve the people of the state of Washington.

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 think this district is purple, Sen. Cantwell and President Obama carried the district in 2012. I see many factors that will help me win this November.