

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: Patty Kuderer

Position Sought: State Senator 48th LD

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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? **Definitely. I will work with our labor unions and social justice organizations to pass a statewide minimum wage to at least \$13.50. The same arguments have been levied against raising the minimum wage since its inception in the 1930's, but none have been supported by the data.**

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier? **I support the right of workers to unionize, with some reasonable limitations for public safety. I support legislation that prevents the identities of workers to be given to organizations that aim to destroy unions such as the Freedom Foundation; I support strengthening the NLRB (though under this Administration that may not do much good) as well as working conditions, a livable minimum wage and allowing local jurisdictions to enact paid sick leave and paid family leave legislation.**

Education

What is your opinion of high stakes testing? How would you change the way students and teachers are evaluated? **While we need to be able to measure academic success, I am against high stakes testing. We have become a nation of test takers rather than a nation of thinkers. My background and involvement in the PTSA has helped me understand how our decisions directly affect our local schools. No Child Left Behind is a classic example of well-intentioned legislation that didn't work. We have had different graduation requirements each year for the last five years. That also doesn't work and needs to be fixed. Of course, we need to measure student and teacher performance but this needs to be straightforward with involvement from local school districts. The TPEP was a big step in the right direction for evaluating teacher performance. We need to consider other options for measuring student success other than one test/subject prior to graduation.**

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What is your opinion of charter schools? **The Supreme Court has ruled charter schools unconstitutional, and I believe last year's 'quick fix' to keep charter schools in our state will also be ruled unconstitutional. I believe in innovation in our schools. I just haven't given up on our public school system to provide that innovation. We have academic achievement gaps and roughly a fourth of students aren't graduating. So, we need to continue to look for solutions. However, I believe we can do that in our current public school system.**

Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources? **It starts with the state setting the example. The state needs to have clean cars, buy clean energy and make sure any new construction project is built green. I believe we have to set up a mechanism that creates economic incentives for corporations to lessen their impact on the environment and reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. I'm excited to work with the governor and other environmental leaders to get that done.**

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most? **Again, this is where the state can set a strong example. Our pension boards need to move away from investing in fossil fuels and look toward the new green economy. I believe in strongly investing in green energy companies that are innovating and that need help scaling to bring down the overall cost especially of wind and solar. I support solar incentive legislation to extend subsidies for individuals and community solar projects.**

Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform? **I support creating a state bank to invest tax dollars in public projects, saving the taxpayers millions of dollars in debt payments that currently goes towards Wall Street banks.**

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system? **Washington's tax system is not just highly regressive, it's the worst in the country. That means Mississippi is more progressive than we are when it comes to tax fairness. That must change if we are to continue to move forward and address the serious issues facing our state. I believe we need to start with tax break accountability. Any tax break that is not tied to a measurable public good, job retention or job growth, should be immediately sun-setted. Each tax break needs to show that it is helping the economy or creating jobs. We also have to revise B&O which currently is a huge impediment to small business growth.**

Finally, we need to consider changing the way we raise revenue. Our policies should align with our other values, for example setting a carbon tax on major polluters that raises money and also reduces greenhouse gas emissions. I also support a progressive REET tax where the amount you pay is directly depending on the sales price of the home, and a limited capital gains tax that excludes, for example, retirement, small family owned businesses and residences. And we need a State Bank that will help lower taxes.

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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. **Healthcare is a right, not a privilege you get because you are fortunate enough to have a large wallet. We have finally made steps in the right direction on health care with the Affordable Health Care Act. I believe we need to keep building on that to ensure more accessibility and accountability. We should make sure we know the impacts of the ACA (both the good and the bad) as we move forward to ensure that all Americans have access to quality healthcare. I am strongly opposed to the Republican efforts to repeal and replace the ACA. I believe their proposed legislation would result in massive harm to millions of Americans, including many who live here in Washington state.**

What policies do you oppose and what polices would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare? **These programs are so critical to seniors. My first step would be to subject all wages above the current limit of \$127,200/year to Social Security payments. I believe these programs are essential to our safety net and I am not interested in changing the age requirement. I also oppose privatizing Social Security. This earned benefit, which we pay into over the course of our working lives, is NOT an entitlement, and is one of the most successful New Deal programs we have ever had.**

Security/Public Safety

How would you act to stop the militarization of local police forces and establish civilian oversight of law enforcement? **I will always stand with citizens to ensure their rights are protected. I am a strong supporter of civilian oversight over local police departments. I am also a supporter of cultural competency training and community oriented policing. The bottom line is there is a lack of trust between large segments of our population and law enforcement. That will only change through honest communication.**

How would you preserve national security while protecting American's right to privacy? **Most of these laws are made at the federal level, not the state. Nonetheless, we need to be mindful of our right to privacy while ensuring law enforcement has effective and efficient tools to fight terrorism. We need to follow the Constitution. As an example, I supported efforts in the Legislature this year to protect the internet privacy of Washingtonian's following the Republican-led efforts in Congress to roll back regulations on internet service providers. I also think we need to regulate the sale of our information by retailers, financial institutions, and social media. We also need to educate our kids about sharing too much private information on social media. Protecting our privacy in this technological age is one of our greatest challenges.**

General

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why? **Yes and Yes. I believe we need to do more as Democrats to deal with economic and social justice issues. I believe strongly the Democratic Party needs to focus on bread and butter issues like wages, health care, pay equity, family leave and sick leave, criminal justice,**

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campaign finance reform, and the environment. We need to build a more diverse, inclusive party that brings concrete results that improve people's lives. To be fair, even though I disagree with the way it was expressed, the anger we saw last year was not just real, it was justified. And all of us need to do better at listening and responding to those valid concerns.

What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why? **I strongly agree with the principles set out in the summary of the party 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? **In the fall of 2015, I ran a campaign for the appointment to the House of Representatives and won. Last year I successfully ran to retain that seat, and then in January of 2017, I ran another appointment campaign for the State Senate and won. I've also participated in a variety of local, state, federal candidate and issue campaigns. A lesson I've learned repeatedly throughout each of these experiences has been the importance of engaging the voters on a one-on-one basis and listening to their input.**

Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices? **Yes. I was a precinct committee officer in Clyde Hill from 2004-2005 and 2015-2016. I was a member of the 48th LD executive board and a representative to the King County Democrats Endorsement Committee and the female alternate to the King County Democrats Central Committee.**

What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it? **Education policy and funding remains my top priority as we work towards fulfilling the state's paramount duty. Eliminating and sun-setting tax breaks, making the B&O tax fairer, and taxing capital gains and carbon are all among revenue options on the table. I am open to all suggestions to ensure we can fully and fairly fund our education system. I also believe that in order to have good government, you need good people in government. In short, intentions matter. And I intend to do the best job I can for the people of this state.**

Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions? **There are many issues that are a close second to education funding. I care deeply about income inequality, transportation, affordable housing, women's reproductive rights and the environment. I am excited to work with labor organizations and economic justice organizations on minimum wage, paid family leave, paid sick leave and gender pay. As FDR said, 'the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.'**

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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? **The 48th District now leans Democratic. That said, I don't take anything for granted and intend to work hard with a very aggressive ground plan. I also plan on working closely with all progressive allies to win this election.**