

# 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: Kathy Gillespie**

**Position Sought: State Rep. 18<sup>th</sup> LD Pos. 2**

**Campaign Manager: Interviewing to hire in 2018**

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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 supported I-1433. I support local communities that wish to debate and decide upon additional increases, specific to their community, and with local voter approval. On the federal level, I do think it is time to move the 2009 rate of \$7.25 up especially considering a partial move to \$10.20 that was applied to some workers was successful. The correct level is a matter for debate but certainly the buying power of the 2009 federal rate has been diminished leaving low-wage workers behind. It has been estimated that a reasonable rate would be \$12 but I know others believe \$15 is the right standard and some favor \$10. I think an incremental rise, coupled with COLA adjustment, is the right place to start from.**

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier? **Strengthening penalties when companies are found to have intimidated or interfered with workers who want to discuss, debate, and ultimately, vote yea or nay, to organizing.**

## 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. No one test should determine a student's future opportunities. In our state, before laws were changed, a student could fail a subject test in say biology, and not graduate. Using a model of continuous learning, and respecting the basic premise that formative assessments are necessary to determine mastery in order to move to the next concept, a process emerges that continuously monitors learning and determines mastery. Students are then evaluated on what is learned and what will be learned next. Teachers are evaluated on student progress – in other words, is a student showing steady progress towards mastery.**

What is your opinion of charter schools? **In a healthy system where student needs are being met through innovative programs and standard programs, as is pervasive in SW Washington, we find that the hybrid public school model of many magnet program offerings as well as multiple schools of choice**

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sufficiently addresses parent and student needs. This is my preference, to have local school districts overseen by elected school board directors who answer to the community, running dynamic school systems with choice for all. I realize this model is not a reality across our country but privatization of public schools is not something I support.

## Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources? I like incentives for private firms and entrepreneurs and leading by example so government agencies should begin the transition – I think many have – to natural gas, solar, wind etc. and report cost savings, efficiencies, achievement of policy goals, etc.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most? Local communities need to have a say in what forms of renewable energy they favor – wave energy on the coast to wind energy in Goldendale – all options should be on the table for Washington citizens to consider, debate and test and implement.

## Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform? I have read Sen. Hasegawa's SB 5464 and see it is stuck in committee likely due to the objections from private banks. I think the bill should get a complete hearing and a public vetting so that Washington can decide if this option is a good fit for our state. Lack of debate is troubling.

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system? I've focused on the out-of-control tax exemptions that now number more than 700+ including 14 new breaks from the last session. It should be a minimum expectation that all citizens simply pay their fair share and we know that is not the case. We need real debate to determine the incremental steps we can take to reversing the upside down reality.

## 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 want all citizens of any age to have the same access to health care that I have and I support the Affordable Care Act and needed reforms geared to improving access, lowering costs. I am interested in learning more about a kind of hybrid system, successful in other places around the world, that would allow coverage for all with an employer-based system so that people can keep that coverage. Honestly, I am no expert but I can say my goal is to get to basic health coverage for all citizens and I think our state should lead the way.

What policies do you oppose and what policies would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare? No privatization. Instead, strengthen and, reform to strengthen, based on evidence, data. Again, I am not an expert.

## Security/Public Safety

How would you act to stop the militarization of local police forces and establish civilian oversight of law enforcement? I'd prefer that local agencies not be a repository for military equipment and I'd like a return to

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community policing focused on building relationships with people. I think we need to invest more in training and possibly change who we are recruiting so that we are hiring those in the “people” business. Local communities have the right to establish local boards of oversight.

How would you preserve national security while protecting American’s right to privacy? **It’s a balance of course and I am not an expert by any means. The digital age has changed so many things – I do not feel qualified to say more than this – I expect to be left alone unless I violate the law.**

## General

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why? **Yes, yes.**

What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why? **The general summary platform resonates with me - it speaks to justice, fairness, equity and stewardship – among other things.**

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? **Two-term school board director Vancouver Public Schools, one failed run for state rep 2016. I learned starting early to allow time to reach citizens is key, followed by a robust plan to meet and talk with voters every day. I also learned that passion for serving the people is a must. Some run for vanity – that does not work.**

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? **We need to end the debate around basic education funding by fully funding education and turning our attention to strengthening our public schools K-20. Industry and business leaders tell us there is much work to do preparing people for the workforce – we need to get it right. I’ll advocate to reform tax exemptions and look for budget solutions that honor our commitment to education and the future success of our state.**

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

**Many other issues like infrastructure, healthcare, support for seniors and their caregivers – including families - support for business development and expansion of opportunity for entrepreneurs, safe communities, a healthy environment. All of these issues intersect. The approach is to bring citizens in on the conversation, equip them with facts and tools to advocate, to elevate and amplify their voices to improve decision-making. Too much happens behind closed doors. I want an open government with reform so that lawmakers can’t hide who they talk to. My approach, besides empowering citizens, is to find common ground and move toward change.**

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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? **Absolutely! We launched Sept. 8 and are working every day to reach voters, raise money and empower citizens by reminding them that we will have the government we allow – no more, no less. That means we take responsibility for the good and the bad by exercising our right to vote out ineffective legislators that do not share our vision and values and replacing them with someone who we believe does – rinse, repeat.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to complete this questionnaire. I have done my best to respond clearly. Public policy making is complex and often quite slow. The long view combined with putting the right people at the table allows for meaningful debate focused on crafting workable solutions that advance our priorities and improve our lives.**

**Sincerely, Kathy Gillespie, 360-901-6538**