

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2018

Submission Note: The submission deadline for this questionnaire is September 5th 2018 12:01 PM PST. It must be submitted to waprogressives@gmail.com to be considered

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: Victor Minjares

Position Sought: Thurston County Prosecutor

Campaign Manager: Jessica Revelas

Consultant: Riall Johnson

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Campaign Phone: (360) 515-7979

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Campaign Address: PO Box 6577, Olympia, WA 98507

Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes, I do.

Labor

Do you support raising the minimum wage in your local jurisdiction if state and federal action continues to be stalled? To what level?

Yes. Every person deserves housing, food, clothing, healthcare, access to clean air and water, and the knowledge that they will be cared for in infirmity or old age. There is ample money available to provide every person in the United States with a minimum income that does not depend on employment. Absent providing a minimum income, workers should be paid a minimum wage with allows them to support themselves and their families. Minimum wages might vary with location, but here in Thurston County, I would support a minimum wage of \$17.50/hour with annual COLA increases.

Education

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

No one's life direction should depend upon a single test taken on a single day. I am not against testing as it can be useful as a tool, but test results are not a substitute for sound judgment and the human factor.

Environment

What can be accomplished at the local level to promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources?

I am in favor of doing everything possible to reach 100% renewal energy sourcing, particularly use of solar

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energy. Localities should provide subsidies and adjust local building codes and expedite permitting processes to maximize adoption of solar energy usage at the greatest achievable rate. This is a matter of survival of the planet. The idea that land and other natural resources can be privatized and exhausted in a single lifetime simply due to antiquated notions of private ownership is unsustainable.

Finance/Taxation

What will you do to support public banking at the local level?

As a former attorney advisor to the Washington State Division of Banks, and the Division of Credit Unions, I favor local credit unions and banks, primarily taking my business to credit unions. National or supranational entities are nonresponsive or too slow to respond to local concerns.

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 am in favor of a national healthcare system as the most efficient, cost-effective, and equitable means of providing for the citizenry and the public welfare. This has been an uncontroversial idea since Otto Von Bismarck first introduced national healthcare in Imperial Germany; the fact that the United States is the only major industrialized country without a working national healthcare system for its citizens is a national disgrace that should be ended at the earliest opportunity.

Security/Public Safety

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

This is one of the goals of my campaign: to make law enforcement responsive to the needs of the entire community, and not just the ownership class. Civilian oversight of law enforcement begins with the prosecutor's office, and too many prosecutors consider themselves as extensions of the police rather than servants of the people. I will institute a broad view on *Brady* information and lists of police officers with credibility issues. I will implement a Conviction Integrity Unit to shine a light on past misconduct by officers and prosecutors, if any. I will establish ethical adherence to the rule of law and service to the public as the primary goal of the criminal justice system.

General

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

Yes, I am a progressive Democrat. I believe in the Enlightenment virtues of freedom and equality, as tempered by the recognition that unjust, inequitable systems must be transformed for all of us to reach our human potential as individuals and as a decent society. Civilization must be based on the recognition of the inherent worth of all human beings over the right of private property and acquisitive instincts. That is why I am a Democrat and a progressive.

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

I agree with the party platform. However, to the extent that the party embraces the subordination of any race or ethnic group, or supports candidates who are inclined to white supremacy, my belief in human equality and dignity will override that of any interpretation of the platform that calls for tacit approval of those tactics or candidates.

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 2012, I ran for Thurston County Superior Court. In that race, I learned that there are many people aligned against doing what is right or legal for mere tribal or associational reasons. Sadly, I also learned how weak the rule of law can be, even in a judicial election. In addition, campaign structure and money is the lifeblood of a campaign, even one with grassroots support.

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

The desire to bring ethics, professional judgment, and basic fairness back to the criminal justice system of Thurston County. In many ways, our county is stuck in the last century. I would like to modernize its policies and procedures - in many cases, creating them from scratch where none currently exist. Every person counts, and every person should be treated with respect - especially when it is most difficult. This requires clear rules and procedures, for when there are few rules, it is nearly impossible to hold public servants to account for misconduct. Our prosecutor's office has forgotten that they are public servants. I want to bring respect, reform, and justice back so that all members of the public can be confident that it is working towards the right result, and not indifferent to the fate of individuals, or the community as a whole.

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

I recognize that I do not know everything, and cannot accomplish my goals without wise counsel from various areas and stakeholders. I have established an Advisory Committee consisting of some of the finest experts in the criminal justice field. While I realize that the responsibility for every decision lies with me, I strongly believe that they must be informed by access to opinions of the best minds and resources available.

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?

Although Thurston County is considered solidly Democratic, it has many of the old-fashioned conservative ways and characteristics of the small, rural county it used to be. The county is named after a 19th century white supremacist, Samuel Thurston, who never actually set foot here. These antiquated

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patterns and lack of clear rules are holding the county back. Its policies and procedures must be modernized to accommodate its development in recent decades and the diversification of its ever-growing population.

There are opportunities for building coalitions to form a better path. Overcharging and negligent enforcement of criminal and civil statutes hurt rural conservatives and more urban progressives alike. Waste of property tax dollars on our proportionally huge jails drains funds for maintenance on road we all drive, water mains, buildings, and sewer systems we all use. The primary election shows I drew support from both ends of the county.

I believe the coalition for progressive criminal justice reform is emerging right now. I want to be the catalyst to ensure that the energy of that union goes towards effective, long-term reforms that all residents of Thurston County can support for decades to come. My dream is to someday make every resident's assumption that one of the best, public service positions one can hold is one with the criminal justice system, where the ethical expectations are high, and the value to the general public is evident not just to the people who live here, but to all who visit and see what we've accomplished. It may take years to get there, but I want people to see that we have clear ideas about where we want to go, and that we are definitely on the way towards real justice.