

**Abigail Doerr for King County Council Questionnaire  
Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019**

Submission Note: The submission deadline for this questionnaire is 12:01 PM PT, ten days prior to the membership meeting where the candidate's endorsement will be considered. Please refer to the questionnaire deadline and meeting date here:

<https://waprogressives.org/endorsements/endorsement-policy-and-timeline/>.

➤ This questionnaire must be submitted to [waprogressives@gmail.com](mailto: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:** Abigail Doerr

**Position Sought:** King County Council District 4

**Campaign Manager:** Bridget Doyle Williams

**Consultant:** Northwest Passage Consulting

**Campaign Email:** [abigail@abigaildoerr.com](mailto:abigail@abigaildoerr.com)

**Campaign Phone:** 509-263-0144

**Website:** [www.abigaildoerr.com](http://www.abigaildoerr.com)

**Campaign Address:** PO Box 23037 Seattle, WA, 98102

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

**Questions:**

**Labor**

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

I absolutely support raising the minimum wage. Seattle's minimum wage is currently between \$12 (for small employers) and \$16 an hour (for large employers) and by 2021 all employees will be at a minimum of \$15 per hour. However there are parts of King County who are only required to comply with the state minimum wage which is currently \$12 an hour and will cap at \$13.50 an hour. Our communities have become unaffordable and \$13.50 is not a living wage across Washington and I would strongly support increasing the state minimum wage to at least \$16 per hour. In King County a living wage is \$16 an hour for a single person and many workers are not required to be paid that much and it is unacceptable. For a single person and a child a living wage is nearly \$30 an hour because of child care costs. I support King County raising the

minimum wage - but it would only have jurisdiction over unincorporated King County. King County must use its outsized level of influence lobbying in Olympia for a higher minimum wage and for universal child care.

Child care is the largest household cost for working families and low and middle income families alike are in desperate need of a universal and statewide program. This policy would be monumental for our workforce and for gender pay equity. I will work to ensure King County creating local child care facilities and lay the groundwork for ambitious programs to ensure our child care workers are paid well, trained well, and that our families have reliable and safe setting to care for their kids while they work.

I've been proud to stand in solidarity for the biggest labor fights here in our region - I knocked on doors for \$15 minimum wage in SeaTac, petitioned for paid family leave, and will be standing shoulder to shoulder with workers leading the next fights.

Enforcing wage standards and labor protections is more important now than ever and setting higher minimum wages and other labor protections is only half the battle. I am a strong supporter of the City of Seattle's Office of Labor Standards that serves as both a body to provide workers with resources, tools, and legal aide to protect their rights, but also actively investigates and ensures that businesses and employers in our region are complying with our laws.

## **Education**

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

The harm high stakes testing has on our communities is far greater than their benefits. Unfortunately, high stakes testing has become the prominent tool our education system uses to hold students, teachers and principals accountable. Not all students, teachers and schools are the same so neither should the way we evaluate them. High stakes testing also disproportionately harms young students of color, particularly those from low-income families, and students of color are more likely to be held back for low test scores than white students. High stakes testing also harms schools that are in low income communities of color and can lead to the layoff of teachers, principles and even the closure of a school.

High stakes testing undermines equity in our public schools and hurts communities. Though the County doesn't directly govern our education systems, I would advocate for performance and portfolio based assessment, formative assessments, and site visits. I'm also open and willing to learn of other assessment alternatives that create healthy and positive learning environments for our young people.

The biggest role King County must play in improving education outcomes, especially for our low income and youth of color is through targeted investments from Best Starts for Kids. 71% of King County's general fund is invested in our criminal justice system and we must increase the level of upstreamed investments to support our most vulnerable youth in our schools.

## Environment

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

The threat of climate change and its impacts on our communities is imminent. We have 12 years to do something about climate change and I am running for King County Council because we need leaders who are moving forward solutions that reflect the magnitude of the problem. In 2018, I was proud to have led the Initiative 1631 campaign - Washington State's Green New Deal. I-1631 would have held corporate polluters accountable for the harm they've caused in our communities and made historic investments to transition us to a clean energy economy and invest in the communities who have been and will be hardest hit by climate change: low-income communities, tribal communities, and communities of color.

King County is well positioned to address climate change but it is not on target to reach the goals in the County's Climate Action Plan. The King County Council must move urgently and decisively to play a leading role in addressing climate change and protect our natural resources.

The King County Council recently passed a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure that applies to unincorporated King County. Had I been on the council, I would have voted for this effort and would enthusiastically lead similar efforts. However, I am concerned that the current council is more interested in bringing forward ideas that sound good on the surface and then upon closer look it's clear that the action was much weaker than it should have been. I was disappointed that the language in the ordinance did not specifically discuss race or equity nor did it lay out any tools to ensure that we are supporting workers who are employed in the fossil fuel industry transition to clean energy jobs. Additionally, the moratorium is a good step but its impact is minimal. The effort seemed like an opportunity to publicly take on oil companies but the council has failed to advance additional bold policies that would actually help the County reach its goals in the climate action plan - such as developing solutions to how we are going to expand our transit system.

We must implement tangible strategies to transition our region off fossil fuels and towards clean energy that have labor and communities of color at the table. It is not enough to block future fossil fuel infrastructure - we must develop long term and intentional strategies to invest in alternative energy programs. The task in front of us is monumental but achievable. We can drive King County to 100% renewable energy, but not if the policies we pass have nothing under the hood.

I will partner to develop real solutions to:

- **Expand our transit system:** The number one contributor to climate change in King County is carbon emissions from transportation fuels. King County Metro is not on target to reach our transit goals in the climate action plan. We must expand transit region wide through a transportation benefit district and ensure we are developing additional tools to increase transit trips all across our county.
- **Electrify our transit fleet:** Metro is on track to transition the diesel bus fleet to electric battery by 2040 - we must work more urgently to get the fleet transitioned to electric in under 10 years.

- **Get a Subsidized Transit Pass into the hands of every person in King County:** Many of our major employers do not provide fully subsidized transit passes to their workers, including the University of Washington. That is unacceptable. I will partner with the City of Seattle and our businesses and advocates to develop strong policies to get free and affordable passes into the hands of everyone in this city.
- **Improve first and last mile connections to transit:** King County must be working with local jurisdictions to ensure that our transit infrastructure has safe and reliable connections to get people to and from transit.
- **Ensure King County Flood Control District funds are combating climate change:** The King County Council must lead on stormwater clean up through the King County Flood Control District, whose board is the King County Council. Seattle residents contribute 40% of the revenue in the Flood Control District and only 10% of those funds are invested in Seattle. Resources that are currently spent on cement levy structures rather than critical habitat restoration and stormwater projects that can better prepare us for floods, prevent landslides, and ensure that stormwater is not entering our water systems.
- **Build Dense Housing:** Ensuring people are housed and housed densely is one of the important intersections of climate, land use, and transit. King County must be leading the charge to ensure we have the infrastructure funding (and green jobs) for much needed housing from zero to middle income levels. Utilizing the Growth Management Act as a tool to incentivize and ensure local jurisdictions are zoning appropriately to densely prepare for growth and prevent sprawl that harms our environment.

I am running because I want to ensure that King County is safe and healthy for everyone. King County needs a champion on the Council who prioritizes our environment. We can have a major impact on the future of our environment if we move more people out of cars and into walkable, bikeable, and thriving communities.

My opponent has had 25 years in elected office to act urgently to address the threats to our environment. While I respect her and her long career, her legislative and council track record do not demonstrate that she has been an environmental leader. Additionally, in the last 10 years she has accepted over \$100,000 in corporate PAC contributions, including over \$1,000 from the Washington Oil Marketing Association who promote the use of petroleum and oil in Washington State. I spent 2018 taking on big oil who spent \$32 million to ensure that I-1631 would not pass and am not accepting nor will I ever personally accept any corporate contributions. The oil industry has spent over a century destroying our planet and harming our health and continue to demonstrate the great lengths they will go to lie and manipulate the public to protect their corporate profits and CEO bonuses.

### **Finance/Taxation**

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

I am supportive of a public infrastructure bank for the City of Seattle and will work to use King County's lobbying arm to pass legislation at the state level allow for the creation of a public bank at local levels.

Our regressive tax system is unacceptable, the wealthiest people on the planet live in King County and we have some of the most egregious income inequality. I was told by my opponent and heard her say at forums that we are just too restrained to progressively fund our region. I reject that premise and won't stop fighting for progressive funding solutions.

I support progressive funding mechanisms that undo the state's upside-down tax code. WA has the most regressive tax structure in the country. This has exacerbated income inequality, shrunk the tax base, and hurt our communities. The gap between the poorest and richest members of our society is unacceptable. In one of the wealthiest regions of the wealthiest country on earth, no one should live in poverty. Our tax code should reflect our values and guarantee that low-income and middle-income people should not shoulder the brunt of paying for our social and physical infrastructure. Municipal banks would be an important tool to ensure that public investments can be made on our terms rather than corporate interests that led to the 2008 financial crisis. We need to divest from corporate banking and public infrastructure bank would ensure that our communities are benefiting from the investments made in the infrastructure we also badly need.

Having watched elected leaders and community groups advocate for progressive taxation over the years, it's clear to me that it is necessary to reframe the conversation and ensure we are developing an intentional message that shares the opportunities we could achieve by eliminating this broken tool. Key partnerships with advocacy organizations is also necessary for the issue to be resolved. Budgets are not sexy nor is wonky revenue policy and as a result the urgency from the legislature to address this has not been realized. I've watched the legislature in the last two cycles take on some of our biggest structural issues. However, progressive funding has been the lowest of priorities and the hardest to develop a majority.

I have spent my career working to build public support for increased revenue -- and in all of these efforts we've needed to clearly layout the benefits and what you get when you vote to increase your taxes. King County leaders must both lead the charge for reforming our broken tax system but also ensure we are demonstrating the incredible value of investing in our government programs and helping frame the message about the many ways we'll see the benefits of changing our regressive system.

### **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 strongly supportive of Medicare for All. Health Care is a human right and the costs of health care continues to be too high here in King County. King County plays a very important role at Seattle and King County Public health in providing our public health centers and health care enrolment. King County Government must be a leading lobbying force to create Medicare for All in Washington State.

### **Security/Public Safety**

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

Much needs to be done to reform our criminal justice system, and while much attention has been paid to the necessary reforms and citizen oversight of the Seattle Police Department, much work needs to be done to reform the King County Sheriff's office. Additionally, I will immediately move forward legislation similar to San Francisco's legislation to prevent the use of facial recognition by our King County Sheriff's.

### **General**

#### **• Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?**

I consider myself a Democrat and a progressive. I believe the Democratic Party can be pushed to be more progressive and that's why I'm running against a long time incumbent. We live in an age where "progressive enough" is not enough and we need every elected official in all levels of government actively pushing against the status quo. When I decided to run I was encouraged by my opponent and others in the Democratic party to wait my turn. It became clear to me that "wait your turn" has been the expectation of like minded bodies of government and another reason why we need new energy on the County Council. Complacency and being comfortable in the status quo hinders progress and I will not stand for that.

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

I was disappointed to see that the King County Democrats included the question: "Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor?" in their questionnaire. While I have not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, I believe that this question has been used to deny opportunities to formerly convicted people. One of our core values as progressives is our belief that people are more than the worst thing they've done. We should live that value and avoid participating in systems that continue to punish individuals who are convicted of crimes after they have served their sentence.

I also believe the Washington State's Democratic Party Platform does not include a bold enough vision to reform our criminal justice system. One of the biggest issues in King County regarding our criminal justice system is our youth detention facility - and the state platform does not state that we should be working to achieve zero youth detention and should not be incarcerating our youth.

#### **• 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?**

This is my first time running for office. Previously, I ran a number of local and statewide initiative campaigns. I have spent my career bringing together coalitions of labor, business, communities of color, environmentalists and more to tackle some of our regions biggest challenges. I led the campaign to pass Sound Transit 3 and to bring more Metro Bus service to our neighborhoods. I led the statewide Initiative 1631, a first in the nation effort to equitably address climate change

by placing a fee on pollution. I am committed to building healthy, thriving, and equitable communities and will fight to ensure King County is moving forward on housing and homelessness, public transportation, and our environment.

Over the years I have been reminded of the power of people and it has inspired me to keep fighting for a more progressive Washington. While running I-1631 myself and thousands of volunteers across the state fought against \$32 million of big oil money. Volunteers dedicated countless hours doorbelling, phonebaking, and canvassing. These volunteers inspired our team to keep pushing and send a message to big oil that their time is up. We lost in the end but in the process we changed the narrative around climate change, mobilized thousands of people, and were able to create momentum for the bold environmental policies we saw pass this legislative session.

**• 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?**

After initiative 1631 failed last fall, I spent a lot of time thinking about what the best way I as an individual could ensure that we are acting urgently on climate change. And it became clear to me that at every level of government we need to be doing all that we can do to address this global crisis. I have spent a lot of my career lobbying King County and Sound Transit for more transit and it was clear to me that the potential for the King County Council to lead on climate was not being met. The County Council is a sleeping giant and needs to be woken up.

I laid out the start of my environmental platform above, but it is critical

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

King County needs 244,000 units of low-income affordable housing by 2040 and as of now, King County does not have a plan financing plan to meet that need. It is my priority to develop a 20-year housing plan with meaningful mechanisms to meet our goals. As a region, we have experience creating and implementing similarly ambitious plans as we did with the formation, advocacy, and eventual voter approval of Sound Transit 3. We identified a long term need and rolled up our sleeves to do the hard work to map out the funding and revenue needs, obtained authority from the legislature, and then worked hard to get voter approval. I believe King County needs to do similar work to address the affordable housing crisis, and specifically its impact on women and communities of color and survivors of domestic violence.

**• 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 am running for office in the most Democratic district in King County (and the state). I believe that because it is the most transit dependent and most democratic we need to ensure that we are using this seat to push for the most progressive policies possible. There are Republicans on the King County Council who have been effective at maintaining the status quo and we need someone on the King County Council who will be fighting hard to ensure King County reflects our progressive values.