

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 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: Dominic Barrera

Position Sought: Port of Seattle, Position 2

Campaign Manager: TBD

Consultant: Jason Bennett, Argo Strategies

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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?

Yes. I support a \$15/hour minimum wage for *all*. Though the City of SeaTac and the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport currently have what many refer to as a \$15/hour minimum wage, there are exemptions that allow many large companies to pay well below this amount. Specifically, air carriers are exempted from paying their own employees the voter approved and court upheld minimum wage. I would bring a resolution to effectively remove this exemption at Port facilities and prevent others from being instituted (such as exemptions to pay tipped employees less). I also believe it is important for policy makers to ensure minimum wage is keeping up with inflation and the cost of living in the area and, if elected, would commit to doing that at the Port of Seattle.

Education

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

High stakes testing excludes many students and encourages teachers to "teach to the test". Teacher evaluations should be nuanced and multi-modal (short- and long-term student success and student

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feedback, peer/PTA evaluation, etc. While not within the jurisdiction of the Port of Seattle, I would add my voice to those advocating for changes to high stakes testing.

Environment

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

The Port of Seattle specifically must incentivize the use of aviation biofuels and prepare to be a leader in transitioning the industry as technology and availability improve and must continuously invest in the exploration and refinement of new technologies and operating procedures to maximize efficiency and reduce environmental impacts. I support the recently implemented clean truck program, which can reduce diesel emissions by up to 90% per truck. To ensure equitability for independent owner-operators, the Port must be dedicated to working with eligible parties to help bring their vehicles up to the new, stricter standards.

The simplest way to prevent the privatization of natural resources is to protect publicly-owned, environmentally critical properties for private development. In 2015, I was part of a successful grassroots campaign that stopped the sale of the Myers Parcels, a City of Seattle-owned property with wetlands that feed into the Duwamish River, to a private party which had plans to develop the land for industrial use. I was also part of a 2018 workgroup that helped bring together the City of Seattle and King County to purchase and manage for floodplain restoration a residential property that was for sale along Thornton Creek, a plan that is now in its final stages. I would bring this same philosophy of future-minded stewardship to the Port Commission.

Finance/Taxation

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

I have long supported the goal of a state bank, but similar to minimum wage initiatives, if the state fails to act, larger municipalities with means should lead on this. As a special purpose district, the Port of Seattle would not be the proper conduit for public banking in the aforementioned manner, but the Port does currently have a credit union (POSFCU), which I believe is a critical asset to its members. Again, while local banking is not within the purview of the Port, I would add my voice as an elected official to the record of support there as well.

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 believe a single payer health care system would provide the most thorough care at the lowest individual costs. With that scale and near 100% participation rates, costs would be spread throughout the system a lowered for all, and all members of the community would be served equally without fear of being denied coverage. Service providers would have a greater focus on preventative care, which is far more cost effective and better for society overall. 100% coverage would also save taxpayers and governments from footing the bill of the healthcare market's shortcomings.

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I do not believe municipalities or special purpose districts can lead the way to single payer, though I do believe the state-level could.

Security/Public Safety

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

I believe we as a society are moving in the right direction by rethinking how police officers are trained, with a greater emphasis on de-escalation, bias, and efforts to improve culture within departments. I support the establishment of civilian oversight committees such as those developed for Seattle and King County and would ensure Port of Seattle police are receiving the most up-to-date, informed training.

General

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

Yes to both. I consider myself a Democrat because I believe in an inclusive society by and for all people. This means all people treated equally under the law, all people chipping in their fair share for a better community (publicly funded projects and services), and constantly working toward the equalization of opportunity.

I consider myself a progressive because I believe in challenging the status quo and leading the conversation on new, bold ideas that most policymakers refuse to discuss until a groundswell of public opinion mandates. I was a vocal supporter of ideas once considered “far-left” like increased minimum wage and mandated sick and safe leave, cannabis legalization, and drastic rail mass transit investment before we realized major wins in those areas and will continue to advocate for ideas such as a publicly-funded higher education, a state bank, state-wide progressive tax reform, and municipal broadband until they become a reality.

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

As a lifelong Democrat, I support the WA State Democratic Party Platform. There may be parts where I have stronger feelings than where the party was willing to go, but overall, I support the platform and appreciate the work folks put into it.

- 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 2015, I ran successfully for an open seat on the North Highline Fire District Board of Commissioners. I ran at the urging of another fire commissioner who I had known through community activism. I began my campaign by successfully seeking the endorsement of my local legislative district Democrats organization (LD 33). When filing week ended and I learned I would be running unopposed, I returned my campaign donation and campaigned solely while doorbelling in my neighborhood for other candidates as a PCO.

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This county-wide campaign will be very different. For one, the jurisdiction is much larger and the issues are much broader. We will need a much bigger budget to be successful and will require many more hours of outreach and voter contact. That said, one key difference from my opponents is that I understand the mechanics of winning campaigns and understand the port operations side from firsthand experience.

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

Yes, I have been the Democratic PCO for Glendale in LD-33 since 2013 and served as the male representative to the King County Legislative Action Committee that year, as well as on the 33rd executive board.

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

As a frontline airport worker and union representative, labor is my single most important issue motivating me to run for this office. At both air and seaport facilities, a healthy, fairly-paid, properly-rested frontline workforce is critical to a safe and efficient operation. Unfortunately, unsustainable and potentially unsafe working conditions are commonplace, a problem that will worsen if left unchecked as booming growth continues. Many employees at airport facilities are also still paid significantly less than the voter-approved and court-upheld minimum wage due to a loophole exempting air carriers. As mentioned earlier, I would put forward a resolution calling for the minimum wage to be applied equally to all workers at Port facilities.

For both public and private frontline employees at all Port facilities, I believe the Port has a responsibility to facilitate employee inclusion in implementation decisions and ensuring Port facilities are outfitted with adequate tools and technology. That means inviting labor leaders and workgroup representatives from both within the Port of Seattle and private employers operating at Port facilities and constantly asking how the decisions made at the Commission will affect the frontline operation from those who know best.

I would bring a voice for workers and labor unions to the Commission to ensure that the frontline employees who toil day in and out are not excluded from sharing in the prosperity of our ports, and that our facilities are built and managed to help empower workers to succeed.

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

The Commission has long lacked proper representation from a resident of the areas surrounding Sea-Tac Airport or Seattle's industrial district. I live in Boulevard Park, an unincorporated urban community just south of Seattle city limits, along the Duwamish Waterway, directly under Sea-Tac's northern flight path, and within earshot of the industrial district's seaport. As a homeowner and longtime member of this community, I would bring a voice for people living in the areas most impacted by Port activities. I know firsthand how crucial it is for the Port of Seattle to be a good neighbor.

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The Port of Seattle has an obligation to be a global leader and innovator of new clean technology, refined practices, and creative carbon offsets. The Port must boost investment in infrastructure improvements like inter-modal dockside rail connections that improve freight mobility, reduce diesel pollution, and relieve traffic on our crowded roads, as well as electrical power connections at vessel berths that allow ships to power down engines and decrease fuel use and subsequent pollution. Port leaders and companies operating at Port facilities alike must continuously explore and refine operating procedures to maximize efficiency (such as new, satellite-based NextGen air traffic navigation procedures). The Port must incentivize the use of aviation bio-fuels and prepare to be a leader in transitioning the industry as technology and availability improves. The Port should also advocate for the preservation of large trees and other environmentally critical lands in the region that cut noise pollution, capture carbon, and help offset its massive carbon footprint.

The Port of Seattle has long been plagued with human trafficking activity, a problem with crushing impacts on its countless survivors and victims, and negative impacts on the safety and vitality of surrounding communities. I would make putting an end to these crimes against humanity a top priority for the Port. Public and private leadership operating at the Port must invest more in professionals, technology, and data-sharing to proactively fight the problem, and employees at all levels working at Port facilities should be trained and empowered to identify and report suspicious activity.

- 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?

As a countywide candidate, the overall electorate is strongly Democratic, however there are pockets of our county that vote heavily Republican. That said, there are many moderate, environmentally-focused voters in King County. I aim to earn the support of some traditionally Republican environmental voters by discussing the importance of the Port's green agenda and pushing it in a more aggressive direction.