

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: Alyssa Humbert

Position Sought: Olympia City Council, Position 2

Campaign Manager:

Consultant:

Campaign Email: votealyssa@humbert.us

Campaign Phone: 360-252-9585

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Campaign Address: PO Box 13354 Olympia, WA 98508

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 would love to start at \$15/hr. We need living wages for everyone.

Education

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

I believe that teachers are being burdened to teach according to rigorous standardized exams rather than teaching at their best ability. I think high stakes testing is failing our students and is an outdated method of education in our modern, creative, and diverse world. I think student and teacher evaluations needs to be more individualized and considerate of circumstances such as socioeconomic status, district, funding. Let's find a way to encourage teachers to remain passionate about teaching and students remain passionate about learning, rather than discouraging both with the constraints of high stakes testing.

Environment

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

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privatization of natural resources?

We need to do everything we can to encourage alternative, renewable energy and away from using up our precious natural resources. I would make incentives for private citizens to use alternative energy sources, such as waiving local sales taxes for solar panels and fuel-efficient cars. Let's enact heavy carbon taxes on corporations who are polluting without consequence. I believe in Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) which helps communities like Olympia make their own decisions about where their energy comes from and gives citizens a say in the operation of their utilities.

Finance/Taxation

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

The first thing I can do is talk to people about what public banking is and how it differs from other types of banking. I can point to successful public banking systems, such as the North Dakota public bank and the former United State Postal Service banking service, as well as public banking in other countries. Knowing that citizens can have a somewhat suspicious or negative view of government institutions, I can point out those institutions which work and are highly successful, such as our library 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.

We need Medicare for All because it's time we start taking care of each other rather than paying out to pharmaceutical companies and medical insurance companies, not to mention medical equipment companies, etc. who are out to gain a profit. It's time we put our taxpayer dollars into providing healthcare for all. The lack of Medicare for All is hurting the populations who are already the most disenfranchised and enough is enough. Healthcare is a human issue, it affects us all, so we need to have medical care for everyone. On the local level, I can't wait to see my neighbors, friends, and family finally find relief from their medical ailments that they spent so much time and money trying to resolve. I believe that service providers will finally be able to treat their patients effectively rather than cheaply, or conversely, profiteering through unnecessary medical practices. The government will finally be doing something right for its citizens and I think we'll see many local problems become alleviated such as substance abuses, unemployment, and crime.

Security/Public Safety

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

I request that all government agencies undergo diversity training to learn about different people, different cultures, even different mental states so that they can be more empathetic in dealing with the public. There are some weapons that the police force does not need and should only be reserved for the military, so I would investigate how to prevent our local police from obtaining surplus military equipment (as established by the DoD's 1033 Program). We need to hold police accountable for their actions just as we expect civilians to be held accountable for their actions. Special task forces who are specifically trained to deal with certain groups of the population should be deployed for emergency calls that are mental health related and for juveniles involved in emergency calls so they do not become escalated.

General

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- Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?
I consider myself a progressive Democrat because I believe in strong unions, I support teachers, I support the LGBTQ+ community, I believe in protecting our environment, I am pro-choice, I believe the government has a duty to protect us from corporations, I believe in campaign finance reform, I believe in free speech, I support immigrants and refugees, I believe in prison reform, I am a woman, I am an Asian-American, I have voted along Democratic lines since I was able to vote.
- What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why?

Page 41 point 12 of the platform states that the WA Democratic Party calls for “Market-based compensation for public employees.” Insofar as the intention is to ensure that governments can compete with industry for top talent, and ensure their employees are paid a living wage, I see merit in the idea. Before throwing my support behind this point, though, I would need to see (or be part of shaping) the specific policy proposals. My fear is that the word “market” is often a dog-whistle for neoliberal exploitation of the working class. I would only support such a proposal if it came with very strong safeguards for workers.

The platform also makes no mention of any form of UBI. I think that with current and future levels of automation, it is imperative that we ensure that loss of work does not mean loss of income for the working class. There are many proposals for how to implement something like UBI, and I don't currently advocate a specific one, but I do think it is a critically important topic of discussion and research.

- 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?
I have not participated in any campaigns for office. However, I have a background in nonprofit management which included volunteer recruitment, training, and retainment. In my nonprofit work, I was responsible for identifying donors and soliciting donations, managing databases on donors, and speaking publicly about the organization's work. In this role, I worked with low-income families who were often immigrants and refugees, many of whom spoke little or no English. I have experience working with minority groups who often go underrepresented in the community. I believe this experience is applicable and will help my campaign.
- Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices?
No, I was PCO in Tumwater for about a month until I moved.
- What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it?
My biggest issue is housing. Many citizens are frustrated with the houseless population in our area. Greedy developers have spent money trying to convince local citizens that the solution to the houseless issue is to build high-density housing on small land plots, wherever empty land can be found. However, these high-density buildings have not proven to be effective in removing the houseless population and is in fact an insensitive reaction to the very complex houseless issue. The houseless population needs to be addressed with empathy, medical care, mental healthcare, job training, education, substance abuse treatment, and other long term solutions. As for the housing issue, I firmly believe the city of Olympia needs

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to adhere to the Comprehensive Plan which preserves heritage and historic areas, develops high-density housing near transit lines to encourage the use of public transit and walking, and multi-use building complexes. The Comprehensive Plan already allows residential neighborhoods to densify with compatible infill, including tiny houses and cottages, accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, and small town-house buildings. Unfortunately, the city has sold out to greedy land developers who want to overrun every available space with cramped housing. I want to follow the Comprehensive Plan which encourages public transit and walkability, protect green spaces, and provides

- Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions? I'm invested in working families because I have just started a family a my own. I have heard from many families about the difficulty in finding local affordable, trustworthy childcare. Many families have to decide between staying at home with their kids or putting their child in expensive childcare so that they are working solely to put their child in childcare. I want to encourage more local affordable childcare centers that are safe and trustworthy. I also want to encourage free childcare at City Hall and the Courthouse because expensive (or non-existent) childcare prevents many people, especially low income families, from participating in civic life. If we want our children to be informed and serve our communities, we need to welcome them into these spaces and see us, as their parents and neighbors, engaging in civic life. Public space need to also accommodate families by having family bathrooms that can fit whole families, with lowered utilities for children to access, and having changing tables in both men and women's restrooms so the duty of childcare is not inherently foisted onto women.

- 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 not in a heavily Republican area, however I think that by filing to run and getting my name and my issues out to the public, I hope to encourage others to think more progressively, have the courage to think more progressively, and challenge my opponents to move more progressively. I certainly hope that my campaign introduces me to more progressives in my area so that I can continue to work alongside them whether or not I win my campaign.