

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: Matthew Sagen

Position Sought: Yakima City Council District #1

Campaign Manager: None

Consultant: Sasha Bentley

Campaign Email: sagenforyakima@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: 509-952-4082

Website: Not completed at the moment

Campaign Address: 311 N 16th Ave., Yakima, WA 98902

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?

To what capacity I could as a Yakima City Council, yes, I would raise the minimum wage. Even though Washington State has one of the highest minimum wages in the country it is still not a living wage. I agree that we must create a sensible baseline for a minimum wage especially in areas that have an affordable housing problem. I would like to see the minimum wage be between \$15-18 dollars an hour. I also believe that certain special careers need to have a beginning minimum wage as well for example: teachers, doctors, construction workers, etc.

Education

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

I do not think that high stakes testing is effective or the way that we should be determining if our teachers are succeeding or if students are truly "learning". I believe the approach should be completely redefined. According to many teachers, we are teaching to only one style of learning. How can we truly teach a mass population of students when not all of them learn the same way? We need to explore other methods of teaching. I would focus

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

more on changing the way we teach first before I would change the evaluation of teachers and students. This change would probably require low stakes testing where there are no ramifications other than to identify ways to improve.

Environment

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

At this very moment, Yakima city and Yakima County do not have an environmental plan to focus more on green energy or to stop the privatization of natural resources. If elected, I would start work on developing a green energy plan to not only bring diverse long-standing jobs to the Yakima area but to also cut down on our impact. Another way to encourage alternative energy is to encourage less use of natural gas. To do this Yakima would need to start making way for more bicycle lanes and encourage pedestrian zones that are safe and feasible for people to use. Many European countries and major US cities have been incorporating this sort of city planning and I would like to see Yakima join them in their efforts.

Finance/Taxation

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

Public banking can be a viable solution to stop potential financial hazards to the community. If elected, I would work to see if the city can help facilitate a public banking option within the city of Yakima. Currently there is no public banking option in Yakima that I am aware of. Large banking institutions do not care about the working-class people that help support their institution. Yakima can benefit from a public banking option and I would propose creating such an option through facilitation and through public funding.

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.

Healthcare is a human right and not a privilege.

Yakima has a median income level at about \$43,000. Most of the people that work here as laborers do not make that median income level and are not educated about health insurance options. Medicare for All in Yakima would give options to people here who have never had them before. It would need to be offered to the immigrant population that lives here as well. We have one of the highest poverty rates in the state and with that the people who live and work here can't afford a health insurance option at the moment.

The government's role here would be primarily to ensure that everyone has access and that the rates are affordable. Too many people here have to spend too much of their money to pay for prescriptions that they can't afford. The government must step in to facilitate the accessibility and affordability for the citizens that live here.

Security/Public Safety

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

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

Yakima has recently started implementing community policing plans and investing in more outreach with the community. I want to continue this policy and achieve even more outreach to the local communities. The community needs to be involved with policing and needs to have a strong connection with the local police department. I want to see more training for police officers with bilingual officers to be placed in areas where there are large monolingual populations. With the passing of I-940 I want to have more civilian input created with a long-standing committee within the city government. I believe that with more civilian involvement and more outreach from the police department, we can organically scale back military practices within the local police department. Police need to have a large understanding about the small nuances surrounding the various populations in the area. For Yakima those populations would be the Latino and Yakama Nation populations.

General

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

I consider myself a progressive Democrat if not a Democratic Socialist. I believe that social programs are what help keep our society going. Currently we have people who claim that we don't have examples of Democratic Socialism within our country and they couldn't be further from the truth. Only as a community can we truly progress forward into a prosperous future. Without departments such as police, fire, education, etc., we wouldn't have a structured society as we have now and all of these are examples of Democratic Socialism.

As a community advocate, I want to see more investment into our communities through progressive means. In my view, the only way to achieve equity and a true investment in communities is through work that uplifts minorities and give equal access and opportunity across the board. To me this is what being a progressive is all about.

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

As a progressive Democrat, I agree with most of the party platform of the state party. As many other progressives I feel that our elected Democratic leaders do not go far enough to create change for all of us. There are too many corporate Democrats that currently serve in office that could have the potential to make progressive change but often stop too short and this can be seen reflected in the party platform. Specifically speaking, I would like to see a Medicare for All portion in the party platform as well as more outlined economic justice goals. For example: Restore the Glass Steagall Act is a great goal but there is more that can be broken down from this. We can insert "support public banking options to create a more fair and equitable banking system in Washington State".

- 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 campaign as a candidate. Last election cycle (2018) I worked as a campaign manager for four coordinated campaigns. I knocked on over 4,000 doors and called about 6,000 phones in an effort to

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

flip the 15th LD and to elect a progressive democratic county commissioner. Before this organized effort, I had volunteered on campaigns as a canvasser or phone banker but never ran a campaign before. I learned quite a bit about strategy and how to implement an aggressive ground campaign. I also learned how the candidates create their message and what kinds of relationships they build with the voters.

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

I have not been elected or appointed as a PCO. However, I currently hold several positions within the local party and state party. Currently I am one of two State Committee Members represent Yakima County, the Vice-Chair of the 14th LD, and the Western Vice-Chair for the Washington State Democratic Latino Caucus.

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

The biggest motivator for me to run was the fact that Yakima has the potential to really achieve more progressive change within the next 8 years. The current council member that represents District #1 has been instrumental in creating progressive change for Yakima. I want to continue on the projects that she began and see them to completion. These projects are aimed to create more sense of community and to bring more opportunities to the district that is often times overlooked by previous city councils.

As for my proposals to continue forward, there needs to be more adequate lighting, more community outreach by local fire and police departments, and more investment in the community itself from the local leaders. If elected, I would push for more connections to the community and work to provide more accessibility to the local city departments.

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

As I mentioned above the projects that need to be completed are vast and can have vast lasting effects for the district and the entire city of Yakima. In order to complete these projects Yakima needs to invest in more city staff to adequately create appropriate plans and to implement said plans. I would invest in more city planners to create better bicycle paths and pedestrian zones. Ultimately I hope that more diverse industries will come to Yakima to generate more revenue for the city to invest more in areas like District #1.

- 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 a large red area. However, since Yakima District #1 is small and largely populated with liberal leaning voters I believe I have a good chance of winning. My main goal however is to create and facilitate conversations within the community that continue on after the campaign. Such an example would be: how to deal with the ICE flights landing and pick up undocumented immigrants at the Yakima airport?

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

Ultimately, I am hoping that my campaign can help facilitate a coalition between local non-profits and the local democratic party. There are no progressive groups that work here to bring legislative change outside of the local democratic party. Every other non-profit that is able to work in the political realm typically does not focus solely on progressive change.