

# 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: Carrie Blackwood**

**Position Sought: State Senator – 40<sup>th</sup> LD**

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**Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes I do!**

## Labor

Do you support raising state and federal minimum wages? To what level?

Yes. While the state's minimum wage has been given an annual cost-of-living adjustment by L&I since 1998, and will continue to do so again beginning in 2021 following an increase to \$13.50 next year, this annual adjustment has clearly not been adequate to guarantee a living wage for our state's residents. I would support the disjoining of this adjustment to federal CPI and establishment of our own index for maintaining a minimum living wage standard. I would also support the establishment of an index-pegged minimum wage such as ours federally.

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

I support legislation that strengthens protections for a simple majority sign-up process, raises penalties when the right to organize is violated, and promotes good-faith bargaining through mediation and arbitration so that employees can negotiate a first contract.

## Education

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

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While testing can provide our school systems with important information, I am opposed to relying on test scores to make important decisions about students or teachers, such as pay, whether a student will graduate or continue on to the next grade. We know there is gender, ability and racial bias within these testing systems as well, that they promote the separation of the “student” from the child, and that they can lead to teaching to the test instead of teaching to the student, and these are not outcomes we want from our schools.

What is your opinion of charter schools?

I am not in favor of privatizing public infrastructure and believe our education system should remain public. I am in support of reforms to our school systems holistically, as well as to how these schools are funded. The current system of school funding is broken and fundamentally inequitable, leading to student outcomes that further perpetuate our society’s inequalities. Creating systems that ameliorate injustice and inequality, rather than perpetuate them, is one of my fundamental goals in running for office.

## Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources?

I support state subsidies to energy developers to promote the quick and expansive development of systems that we need to meet our new clean energy commitments as a state, particularly those that support renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, rather than just “clean” energy sources which still negatively impact our environment and are less sustainable in the long term. I’m committed to protecting our natural resources as a public belonging, to acknowledging the theft of many of these resources from indigenous peoples, and to strengthening the resource protection rights of these peoples as mandated by treaty.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most?

Wind and solar are the most clean and sustainable forms of renewable energy production. I support developing and investing in a grid system that can both retain and distribute the fluctuating output and demand of electricity from these sources. Non-consumption and reuse are also often overlooked methods of reducing energy consumption.

## Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform?

I would fully get behind the efforts of Sen. Bob Hasegawa to establish a public bank in Washington state, as I believe this would have so many positive benefits for your state.

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system?

I fully support the implementation of a capital gains tax in Washington state, as well as efforts to amend our state constitution to allow for the creation of an income tax, which we desperately need to end our reign as the most regressively taxed state in the nation. Our constitution has been amended 83 times, and the people are for this reform; I believe it is both possible and necessary, and it is one of my greatest legislative priorities.

## Health Care/Retirement

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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.

Two of our greatest health care concerns are its skyrocketing costs and unequal access. Universal healthcare for every resident of Washington state handles both of these issues, as the cost of healthcare goes down significantly if everyone receives adequate care. I support the positions and platform of Whole Washington: healthcare is a human right, the for-profit model has no place in healthcare, and providing healthcare to all will benefit our society as a whole in so many ways, including citizens, providers and government.

What policies do you oppose and what policies would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare?

I believe that we need to have a very strong, well-funded and accessible social security system, so that every single one of us, including undocumented peoples, have the opportunity to have a good life after we have contributed to our community through work.

## Security/Public Safety

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

I support a state-wide mandate which requires the establishment of civilian oversight groups for all law enforcement in Washington. These groups need to be formed thoughtfully, through input from their communities. They must have some disciplinary authority, and integrate the knowledge of law enforcement experts, current and past members of law enforcement, community members and stakeholders, and government agencies. These agencies must be independent of law enforcement, while also working with them to establish community accountability. No system of oversight can be effective without cooperation and goodwill from those who participate in it.

How would you preserve national security while protecting American's right to privacy?

There is abundant evidence that the widescale surveillance of Americans does not necessarily make us safer. As protectors of the peace, we want to figure out what strategies do in fact work to keep people safe, and make good decisions based on that. In pursuing national security, we must never undermine the principles we are trying to protect.

## General

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

I consider myself a progressive Democrat, and have been for my entire life. My ideals align closely with those of the Democratic party, but I also reject the artificial duality of our national politics. While the party system can be a powerful system of consensus building and consolidation of political will, it should not be the primary loyalty of any elected official, nor would it be mine if I were elected. My primary motivation for running is representation of those who have not been traditionally represented by our government, including working people, people of color, immigrants, indigenous people, LGBTQ+ people and women.

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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 do not oppose any parts of the Washington State Democratic Party Platform, but I do believe that the document doesn't go far enough in several respects, particularly when it comes to traditionally marginalized groups. The party's position on Tribal Relations and Sovereignty is one of preventing further harm and disenfranchisement, rather than seeking truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and seeking their input in working with them to enhance their sovereignty, rights and well-being as communities. Not causing further harm to traditionally marginalized groups is simply not good enough for our government, especially given the government's historic complicity in the disenfranchisement of these groups.

- 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?

While I have worked on several campaigns, including the Committee to Elect Cecily Hernandez, I have learned much of what I know about politics, progress and people through my 20+ years of work as a labor lawyer. In my representation of workers, campaigns towards affecting change on the local, regional and state level were part of the daily work. Key lessons from this work have included the difference between pressure and persuasion, leading from the people most affected, the importance of coalition building, and the importance of a fundamental understanding of the goals when working towards change.

- 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?

I'm running because too many are suffering in the midst of abundance and prosperity. I'm running because I understand that quality legislation is not possible without a seat at the table for traditionally underrepresented groups. Communities most affected by our unjust systems know how to best dismantle broken systems. I'm running to be a true representative of the people of this state, especially those who have been denied a voice. I'm running to build a real connection from state government to my community, rather than to corporate and political interests. I am running to champion the progressive values we need to break through the status quo.

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

Implementing a public bank and addressing the regressive tax system are two of my biggest legislative priorities, as those will create financial engines to fund the future that we want for Washington. Creating equitable access to the benefits of our society is my general priority, through avenues such as stronger pay equity laws, better access to civil justice, reform of our criminal justice system, mandatory and lengthy paid family leave, ensuring proportionate access to employment, universal healthcare, and housing. Disparities in access to our societies' benefits based on membership in a protected class exist in almost

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every sector of our society. Creating systems and laws with teeth that reduce these disparities to create equity is what drives me to get to Olympia.

- 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?

My district is solid blue, and it is my belief that society as whole is increasingly embracing progressive values. Through my work as an activist, community organizer, negotiator and coalition builder, I have developed a strong network of connections within my community that has already been brought closer as they unite behind support of my candidacy. As two democratic candidates will almost certainly advance past the primary, my candidacy represents a collection of community members who are united behind a shared belief in the need for real representation and true progressive action in Olympia. I'm honored and humbled to serve as the figurehead of this movement, but know that these connections and strengthened passions and beliefs will endure and continue to grow long after my candidacy has ended, no matter the outcome.