

# Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

**Submission Note:** The submission deadline for this questionnaire is 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:** The Washington State Progressive Caucus supports candidates 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: Christopher Armitage**

**Position Sought: U.S. House of Representatives**

**Campaign Manager: Andrea Griffin**

**Consultant:**

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

## Labor

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

**I support raising the federal minimum wage to a living wage, starting at \$15.00 an hour and adjusted a annually for inflation after.**

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

**Unions should be protected by our Constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. I support laws protecting workers from being terminated for attempting to unionize, and believe "right to work" laws should be abolished.**

## Education

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

**Public education should be treated as a public good and not a commodity. High stakes testing does not help with what should be our nations goal of providing the best education possible to our youth. Alternatives for evaluating teachers and students include:**

1. **Sampling of a representative group instead of all students every year**

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2. **Stealth assessments, that is online exams that do not track mastery at a single point in time but over extended periods and under less time constrained conditions. This includes frequent online, low stress assessments.**
3. **More and different data measures for tracking performance, such as graduation rates, disciplinary actions, teacher assessments, and workforce outcomes**
4. **Social and emotional skill surveys**
5. **Game based assessments**
6. **Inspections**

What is your opinion of charter schools?

**Education for profit creates incentives outside of student outcomes, which should be our top priority. Charter schools have a consistent record of fraud, waste, abuse, and underperformance academically compared to public education. Government money should not go to charter schools.**

## Environment

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

**I support the Green New Deal. Massive new investments in jobs programs and regulatory systems for building a green economy by 2030. By detaching from our need for fossil fuels and natural gas, we can use the shared resource of renewable energy for non profit green energy creation of the sort that countries worldwide are already implementing.**

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

**A federal government job guarantee in green energy sector fields, with heavy investment in worker oriented incentives to make these jobs attractive. Private energy investment is not a priority to me compared to simply doing it ourselves in the most efficient and more importantly effective manner possible. Fossil fuel industry subsidies should be ended entirely and then private renewable energy creators can outcompete them. I do also support financial incentives for those who purchase or utilize renewable resources. I support a mixture of wind, solar, and tidal among other emerging renewable systems.**

## Finance/Taxation

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

1. **15% interest rate cap on all consumer loans**
2. **Ban and penalize evasive and predatory fees**
3. **Postal banking**
4. **Cap ATM fees at \$2.00**
5. **Reinstate the Glass Steagall Act**

How would you restructure the federal taxation system to address the growing problem of income inequality in America?

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1. **Increase progressive tax rates above 37% at \$500k so that the rate continues to increase to a 52% tax rate for income above \$10,000,000**
2. **Close offshore tax loopholes**
3. **Implement Wall Street "Robinhood Tax"**

## 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 support Medicare for All, healthcare is not just a human right but also a pragmatic policy for nations aiming to be competitive in the global economy. Freeing people from fear of being bankrupted by illness needs to be a priority. Economic mobility for the working class is incredibly limited when healthcare is on the line.**

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

**I support increasing Medicare services to help those who need hearing aids and removing unnecessary obstacles that currently exist to disenfranchise or inconvenience those who receive Social Security and Medicaid.**

## Security/Public Safety

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

**Ending the war on drugs and for profit prisons are a huge step towards demilitarizing the police. As former law enforcement, I can say that I personally witnessed how those who are suffering from addiction are demonized and mistreated in our current system. Further, the war on drugs is used as an excuse for increasing militarization of the police. Civilian oversight needs to be maximized through civilian led oversight councils that communicate with the public and are run by local community members.**

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

**Earning my Masters of Science in Homeland Security taught me a great deal about national security infrastructure. We need to ensure durable systems for keeping anti-terrorism investigations entirely separate from law enforcement activities. Maintaining transparency in these processes, and automating it to remove potentially unethical behavior, will help avoid abuse.**

## General

- Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?
- **Yes, I consider myself a progressive Democrat. Progressives are the only group in the nation looking beyond just ideology to find solutions that are proven to work**

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**around the world, and implement them honestly and away from corrupting corporate influences.**

- What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) ( click link to view) do you disagree with? Why?
- 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 held a comedy and music event for the 2018 Lisa Brown campaign. I have also canvassed with the Naghmana Sherazi Spokane City Council campaign. Practical canvassing tools are the main takeaway.**
- 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?
- **Removing corporate money from politics is my top priority. We cannot have an ethical government that governs for the people when it is funded by a small group of wealthy contributors. I support a Constitutional Amendment for publically financed elections.**
- Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions?
- **Healthcare. I support not just Medicare for All, but a Tricare for All. The military system of public hospitals with staffed, qualified, salaried doctors, and no billing constraints, was the exact model our nation needs.**
- 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?
- **In 2018 our candidate was within 9 points. As a working class veteran with a Homeland security background and a progressive platform, I believe we are well positioned to pull in far more independents and base support than previous campaigns.**