

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2019

Candidate Name: Rebecca Parson

Position Sought: US House Representative for WA06

Campaign Manager: None

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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?

Yes, I support Passing H.R.582: the Raise the Wage Act, which would raise the federal minimum wage to 15 dollars an hour. However, a one-time raise will not be enough to make sure that future generations of minimum wage workers are not exploited in the same ways that the workers of today have been. Legislation will need to be passed that mandates a reoccurring raising of the minimum wage. Wage erosion cannot and will not be a permanent staple of the American economy.

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

I support legislation that would make it easier to form and join a union through measures such as a majority sign up process, passing H.R. 2474: the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, enacting "first contract" provisions so that employers cannot prevent union formation via endless stalling, giving federal workers the right to strike, mandating codetermination on corporate boards, guaranteeing the right of first refusal so that workers can buy a company when it goes up for sale, establishing sectoral collective bargaining, ending the ability of corporations to renege on union contracts after merging, banning the permanent replacement of striking workers, establishing federal just cause, ending the exemption of domestic and agricultural workers from protection under federal labor laws, ending the misclassification of employees as contractors or supervisors, allowing secondary boycotts, enacting fair scheduling requirements, and banning employers from forcing employees

to attend anti-union meetings. All in the goal of guaranteeing the right of all workers to unionize, including farm, domestic, and food service workers.

Education

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

I was a substitute teacher for two years and a college instructor for two years before that. I've seen how hard teachers work and how underappreciated they are. They work for such little pay, yet they care so much for their students. As an elementary schooler, I loved school, but my love for school dropped over the years as teachers were increasingly forced to "teach to the test"—an effect of Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. How can our amazing teachers help their students uncover their passions and talents if they are too constrained by trying to make sure every student achieves a performative "minimum?"

Educating our youth today is vital to having a productive, engaged society tomorrow. Teaching to the test is not an effective method to provide students with the skill set they need to navigate a rapidly changing world. I am a firm believer that the best judges of an educator are other educators, therefore I support deeper integration of teachers within the administration and evaluative processes of local school districts. I think a committee of dedicated and passionate local teachers can gauge a teacher's effectiveness with more skill, accuracy, and compassion than an arbitrarily created federal litmus test.

What is your opinion of charter schools?

I am an unabashed supporter of public education. We must increase funding to public schools and make them safe, supportive learning environments for all students—not sell off our system to private, profit-driven enterprises. I also support protecting a parents' right to homeschool their kids, because education is for communities and families, not corporations.

Environment

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

I would help turn our nation around on climate policy by actively supporting the passage of a Green New Deal. This will be America's biggest, boldest, most transformative project since FDR's New Deal and our mobilization for World War II. It will transform our economy so it works for everyone, not just the 1%. We will be taking on the giant fossil fuel corporations, their lobbyists, and the politicians they've bought.

It won't be easy. It will take a mass movement made up of all of us to make it happen. Benchmarks of success include but are not limited to 100% use of renewable energy by 2030, net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers, justice and equity for vulnerable communities on the front lines of climate change, ensuring workers in the fossil fuel industry have a job waiting for them in the new clean economy, supporting local efforts to create change in how food is grown, processed, and

delivered, and holding giant polluters criminally accountable for the willful destruction of our environment.

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

We need to continue to ignite the technologic renaissance happening in the United States that is realizing the primary goal of creating sustainable energy systems that do not and will never again rely on single-use fuel sources. This is why it is so important to support investment in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs, infrastructure, and industry, so the United States can become the leader in new green technology it has the potential to be.

Solar, wind, geothermal, ocean wave, and hereto unknown forms of energy generation have the potential to become efficient enough to power humanity for eons to come if we only put our minds and our resources toward developing them. I also think we should transition away from nuclear power because of its long-term impacts on the environment and potential for catastrophe.

Finance/Taxation

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

Wall Street has run amok with America's money in the decades since the era of financial deregulation began. It is high time that they are held accountable for what they have done and prohibited from ever gambling away the nation's wealth again. Any speculative banking practices that are still allowed after strict 're-'regulation should be heavily taxed as a mechanism to ensure that any massive Wall Street profits made are enjoyed not just on Wall Street, but Main Street, too.

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

Progressive taxation on income is one of the most sustainable methods of wealth reapportionment and revenue generation that our economy can employ. Taxing the rich will have the effect of reducing their oligarchic stranglehold on our democracy and economy — because they'll have less money to spend on rigging everything in their favor. Progressive taxation is one solution to both income inequality and oligarchy.

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.

As a small business owner on Obamacare, my health insurance premiums have gone up 20% in the last three years while my deductible has increased and my doctor's visits have decreased. People in this country are dying because they can't afford treatment or because only one place in town takes Medicaid and it's booked out for months. The solution is Medicare for All. We need

a single-payer, universal, national healthcare system that guarantees care for all, regardless of their ability to pay. Everybody in, nobody out. "Access" to healthcare is corporate-Democrat, lobbyist code for more for-profit plans. Single-payer Medicare for All will have a transformative effect on WA-06, because people who want addiction treatment will be able to get it, diabetics won't go without insulin, and rural hospitals will get the funding they need — among many other benefits.

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

You can count on me to fight for Expanded and Improved Medicare for All, because I refuse donations from insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, lobbyists, and corporate PACs. In addition to cosponsoring Medicare for All, I will fight to reduce the cost of pharmaceuticals, to include dental and vision in Medicare for All, to ensure your complete freedom to choose your doctor, dentist, and other providers, to eliminate co-pays and deductibles, to include mental health treatment in Medicare for All, to ensure the Veterans Affairs health system and the Indian Health Services continue to operate as they do, if not with more support, to include drug and alcohol treatment in Medicare for All, and to make sure that those who can afford it may pay for supplemental coverage.

Social Security has been under attack from the right side of politics and the right side of the Democratic party for decades. I will work to rebuild and reform our Social Safety Net so that those Americans who need it most, and indeed all Americans, will always receive what they need to live with dignity, whether they are disabled, injured, or retired.

Security/Public Safety

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

Continuous de-escalation training for local police forces is a key element to realigning what it means to protect and serve the community as a law enforcement officer, and ultimately that is what needs to occur in this country if we are to truly reject the corrupt and discriminatory police practices that have plagued this nation since its birth. Limits and regulations on the nature and kind of equipment that can be sold to and used by our law enforcement agencies must be put in place in order to halt the transference of the military industrial complex marketplace to our own backyards.

But to fully connect law enforcement to the communities it serves, those communities must be integral in determining how law enforcement shall go about serving them. As a representative, I will fight to support local Community/Law Enforcement Oversight Committees and sponsor legislation that would super-charge these institutions with enough power to create a balanced cooperation dynamic between our citizens and the officers that protect and serve them.

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

Our nation is safest when our intelligence agencies cooperate and share the responsibility of

national defense, acting as a web in which would-be enemies of our country can be identified and caught before tragedies can occur. However, this does not require the constant and invasive surveillance of American citizens as allowed by communications deregulation and the yearly renewal of the chillingly Orwellian Patriot Act. It is high time that American legislators work with our national security agencies to regulate intelligence gathering so that American citizens are guaranteed privacy in conjunction with a functional and precise national intelligence network.

General

- **Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?**
 - Yes. As a democratic socialist, I would place myself at the progressive end of the Democratic party.
- **What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (click link to view) do you disagree with? Why?**
 - None. Our ideals are mutual.
- **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 volunteered as a canvasser for Manka Dhingra for State Senate, Dr. Kim Schrier for US House, Sarah Smith for US House, and Courtney Love for Tacoma City Council. I learned a lot about canvassing, volunteer organization, and messaging. I've also taken a training provided by Brand New Congress for its endorsed candidates.
- **Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices?**
 - Yes, I am a Democratic PCO in precinct 27-401, and I chaired the 2019 endorsement committee for the 27th Legislative District Democrats.
- **What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it?**
 - Climate change is an all-consuming threat and must be the single most important action item on the agendas of every public official across the face of the planet. I would be no exception. The Green New Deal is not a legislative aspiration but a planetary necessity not only for the survival of the human species but the continued existence of global life as we know it. The policy proposals covered by the Green New Deal will place the United States and ultimately the world closer to ameliorating the suffering we are already experiencing due to climate change and possibly avoiding some of the most devastating outcomes that are yet to pass.
- **Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions?**

- My priority is creating a politically and economically democratic society where everyone belongs and thrives. To achieve this, my top three policy priorities as an elected official are the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and a Homes Guarantee.
 - I support Medicare for All because I know many people, myself included, who have delayed or not gotten care due to cost. Additionally, the addiction epidemic is ravaging our district, and people are literally dying waiting in line for treatment. We need drug and alcohol treatment available to all who need it, when they need it.
 - A Homes Guarantee is critical because mass waves of evictions are resulting in people dying on the streets. In a moral economy, everyone has a home.
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- **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?**
 - WA-06 has been Democratic for 55 years, and progressive organizing has been increasing in the past four years. It's a goal of my campaign to build a progressive infrastructure for future organizing.