

Washington State Progressive Caucus Questionnaire 2020

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 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: Jesse James
Position Sought: Clark County Council, Dist. 3
Campaign Manager: Our campaign currently works as a team.
Consultant:
Campaign Email: Jesse@electjessejames.com
Campaign Phone: 360-597-8646
Website: <https://electjessejames.com/>
Campaign Address: 304 SE Hearthwood Blvd., PO Box #872512, Vancouver, WA 98687
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 support the \$15.00 minimum wage, although that is still too low. For county contracts I support paying contractors the prevailing wage.

Education

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

I don't think students, teachers, or schools should be penalized based on test scores. There are many alternatives out there which are superior to high stakes testing. I am not well versed enough to suggest one method over another at this point, but I am willing to learn more about the alternatives.

Environment

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

We can begin by placing a permanent moratorium on expanding fossil fuel infrastructure. On the county level I would like to see building codes changed, requiring all new construction of homes and commercial buildings to be 100% electric. Electric heat pumps should replace gas and oil furnaces. New cooking technologies such as induction cooktops are an alternative to gas cooking.

For multi-family homes such as apartments, new construction should include lockable outlets suitable for electric vehicles. Currently someone living in an apartment cannot consider buying an electric car because they have no way to charge it while at home. If we change the codes to require outlets in parking areas of multifamily homes, then we will see a rise in people purchasing vehicles that do less damage to our environment.

Adding or strengthening incentives to encourage installation of solar panels on rooftops will help encourage people to add them to their homes.

As we move away from fossil fuels, cleaner alternative energy sources become less expensive and more desirable. Our natural resources must be protected wherever possible. I want our water, forests, air, and soil protected. Protecting our farmlands is one of my priorities.

Finance/Taxation

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

I support Sen. Bob Hasegawa's Washington Investment Trust idea which would "keep our tax dollars in Washington state to work for the benefit of our people, not to increase profits for Wall Street." If we can rally a movement in Clark County to create a public bank locally, I would support and cheerlead for the idea. This is something that will take an organized movement from the people to get done, if elected I will certainly do my part to help the movement reach success.

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, now more than ever with the Covid-19 pandemic raging across our country. I believe healthcare should be considered a human right and no one should go bankrupt over a health crisis. Single Payer would ensure quality healthcare for everyone regardless of their financial status, race, or preexisting conditions.

Our county pays out millions in healthcare expenses every year just to cover employees. With Medicare for All, not only will our citizens have real access to care, but our county can save tens of millions of dollars, and that money can be reinvested into other community services which help our citizens.

Security/Public Safety

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

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I support the creations of a Crisis Intervention Team. Whenever possible, it is better to help people rather than arrest them. When 9-1-1 or a non-emergency number receives calls that don't involve a legal issue or some kind of extreme threat of violence or risk to the person, the individual or others, then they will route those calls to a team comprised of a medic and a crises worker. These teams can assess and de-escalate many situations and provide immediate help to those in crises. In Eugene Oregon, a program called CAHOOTS receives at least 20% of 9-1-1 calls that otherwise would go to local law enforcement. Year after year it has saved the city upwards of \$8.5 million. This program helps people and frees the police to concentrate on more immediate threats to the community. This can be paid for by transferring some funds from the Sherriff's Dept, the Jail, and the courts, all of which will be saving money when this program gets started.

I also favor vehicle and body cameras for law enforcement officers, this protects them just as much as it protects the people they confront. In addition, I believe a Citizens Review Board would give our community more confidence in law enforcement over time.

General

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

I consider myself a Progressive Democrat. I strongly believe in Medicare for All. I believe our country is being run by corporations for their own benefits and that they must be reined in to save our democracy. To many politicians on both sides of the aisle are bought and paid for by special interests and that must stop. The game is rigged against 3rd parties right now, and I believe the Democratic party is the closest to my beliefs, and our best chance to make 3rd parties viable is to change the Democratic party from the inside.

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

The provided link seems to be broken. However the two most important things that should be addressed are Climate Change (a new green deal) and Single Payer healthcare.

- **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 am new to politics and this campaign is my first indoctrination. I am learning a lot!

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

No

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

Climate change: The science is clear, climate change is a threat to our children, our security, and our economy. We must act. We must move to an all-electric economy. Building codes need to be updated to reflect this. New construction should move away from heating homes with fossil fuels and use more efficient electric heat pumps.. Many people would like to own an electric car, but apartment parking lots are not equipped with suitable outlets to accommodate these vehicles. Lockable outlets should become standard for new multifamily construction.

It is imperative that we protect our air, water, forests, wildlife, and farmlands. Our natural resources provide employment, recreation, hunting, and fishing opportunities, and are essential to the beauty we all enjoy and appreciate. We must find ways to protect these resources and limit the causes of climate change which will have negative impacts on the livability of our community.

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

Affordable Housing: Affordable housing in Clark County is out of reach for way too many residents in our county. We must work to find solution to reduce costs. We need to address zoning, building costs, and density. Thinking outside the box something we can also consider. Recently the City of Vancouver unveiled their intention to build several tiny houses on a lot in the Fruit Valley area. This will provide low income housing on a rent to own basis. I would like to explore this option countywide. In addition to rent to own, these homes can also be used as transitional housing for those trying to get off the streets and out of shelters.

Public Safety: I support our law enforcement and appreciate the difficult job they have. Our officers are overworked, and they are expected to respond to situations beyond their training. I support a crisis intervention program.

In Eugene Oregon, a program called CAHOOTS receives at least 20% of 9-1-1 calls that otherwise would go to local law enforcement. Year after year it has saved the city upwards of \$8.5 million. This program helps people and frees the police to concentrate on more immediate threats to the community. This can be paid for by sharing budgets from the Sherriff's Dept, the Jail, and the courts, all of which will be saving money when this program gets started.

I also support vehicle and body cameras and support exploring the idea of a Citizens Review Board.

- **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?**

Council District 3 in Clark County is considered a purple area, although in recent years Republicans have been winning here. We do believe we have a reasonable chance at winning this election. We will be making calls, sending mailers, setting up signs, and attending every virtual meeting we can to reach as many people as possible. Our campaign is currently built around volunteers who champion progressive values and are involved in many progressive groups.

I'm proud that our campaign has been endorsed by the Sierra Club, Our Revolution, Clark County Democrats, Clark County Democratic Women, The Washington Progressive Party, Fuse

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Washington's Progressive Voters Guide, recognized by FairVote as a Ranked Choice Vote Champion, and recommended by The Columbian Editorial Board.