Black Lives Matter Seattle King County 2020 endorsement opportunity and process

Black Lives Matter Seattle King County and the Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance congratulate you on your primary election and advancing to the general election.

We are writing to invite you to complete our short candidate questionnaire for the 2020 general election. We will be encouraging our community and allies to be voting for candidates who are supportive of advancing Black Liberation, an equal justice system for all, and community prosperity.

We are asking candidates to complete an online questionnaire, and as a backup, the questions are below. Only candidates who complete the questions will be eligible for endorsement.

The deadline for submitting your answers is Saturday, October 10, at 5:00 PM. For any questions and if you encounter technical difficulties, please contact [EMAIL REMOVED]

Endorsements will be announced on Wednesday, October 15.

About Black Lives Matter Seattle King County

Black Lives Matter Seattle-King County is a social advocacy organization fighting for the protection and liberation of Black Life through advocacy and direct action.

We believe that all Black Lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location.

The Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance is a statewide collective of people and organizations using our voice, our vote, and our power to fight for Black Lives.

Black Lives Matter Seattle King County Political Demands

We demand that racism be declared a public health crisis in Washington state.

We demand a 50% defunding of the Seattle Police Department.

We demand some of the budget formerly devoted to policing be shifted to culturally responsive, community-centric mental health and wellness services.

We demand a justice system that delivers equal treatment under the law.

We demand King County fulfill its promise to, by 2025, transform into a community resource the youth jail unit at Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center.

We demand fully funding education in Washington State with a capital gains tax by 2021.

Black Lives Matter Seattle King County Endorsement Questions

If elected, give examples of how your priorities will support the liberation and protection of Black Lives
locally and across the state?
Do you believe racism is a public health crisis? Explain your answer.
Do you support defunding the police? Explain your answer.
What is your position on charging officers with bodily harm-related crimes when excessive force is used?
Explain your answer.
How does your racial identity shape your perspective of public policy? Explain your answer.
Do you support the restoration of voting rights for Washingtonians who are incarcerated or have been previously incarcerated or owe fees and fines? Explain your answer.

Non-responses to the questionnaire will be evaluated as responses to the questionnaire.
Thank you for your participation in our candidate endorsement process, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Ebony Miranda, Chair
They | Them
Advocacy and Policy Committee
Black Lives Matter Seattle King County

Email address *

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If elected, give examples of how your priorities will support the liberation and protection of Black lives locally and across the state? *

My priorities of supporting the liberation and protection of Black lives will continue. I represented the voices of my community when two years ago I spoke to I-940 on the House of Representatives Floor - not as a victory for legislators, but as a victory for those that experienced loss and violence at the hands of the police. (TVW link available) BLM testified in front of the committee I chair against biased facial recognition software and we passed out a 3 year moratorium on its use in our state. I will continue to be centered in the concerns and voices of my community and I will continue to speak loudly for their issues as I have done - beyond I 1000, beyond I-940, but in concern to educational opportunity, and economic and environmental opportunity as well. I have supported a progressive tax system for years, and I helped put $13 billion dollars into our education system as well as create opportunity for more higher education student aid with $1 billion going to students (half to students of color) that need assistance with college or the trades. I have one of the most progressive voting records in the legislature, and will continue to fight for both equality and equity that is required by my district.
Do you believe racism is a public health crisis? Explain your answer. *

Yes racism is a public health crisis, as it threatens the well being of our whole community. A public health risk is something that is harmful to the health of the community and contributes to disease in humans. Racism certainly fits that definition of something harmful. There is no question in my mind that constant exposure to inequality, discrimination and the insults of racism lead to worsening health outcomes, particularly in communities of color. The role of public health is to protect us, all of us, from environmental hazards and that includes racism.

Do you support defunding the police? Explain your answer. *

I support reallocation of funding to meet the social as well as emotional needs of our community. That means that if the police are called, they should have resources beyond weapons and lethal practices to deal with the situation at hand. Police also need continuous training and counseling on implicit bias with follow up to ensure the training sticks. Right now if you call 911 you get limited options for help - a badge and gun, an ambulance, or a firetruck. We need more options and we can take clear steps towards opening up more options - of changing the culture of police back to being protectors and not enforcers. We can demilitarize the police. We can restrict the use of force, and ban types of restraint. We can give subpoena and investigative power to independent oversight boards. We can redirect funding to proven community based alternatives and we can reduce minor crimes enforcement. I have a record of justice reform - voting to close McNeil prison, supporting the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, voting to restore felon voting rights, voting to reduce financial obligation interest rates, reducing legal financial obligations and creating pathways for payment, and supporting I940 with more requirements for training. There is much more to be done, but at least we are beginning to move in the correct, just direction. This record is all in stark contrast to the prosecutor I am running against.

What is your position on charging officers with bodily harm-related crimes when excessive force is used? Explain your answer. *

Officers should be limited in how many lethal options they have to use in the field and should be prosecuted for using excessive force to cause bodily harm-related crimes. Officers should be trained to use the utmost precautions when confronting a violent or potentially violent situation. There is never a time when unarmed people should end up dead in the custody of armed officers. Having an outside, independent oversight board with subpoena and investigatory powers would help with accountability and oversight.
How does your racial identity shape your perspective of public policy? Explain your answer. *

Like many others, I have learned a lot in the last couple of years about my own as well as others’ racial identity. My goal is not to use my racial identity to form public policy but to be centered in the experiences of my community. My record reflects that effort - creating opportunity for undocumented students as the prime sponsor of the WA Dream Act, feeding tens of thousands of students each morning in our schools without stigma as the prime sponsor of our Breakfast after the Bell Act, tearing down barriers to our democracy with our Access to Democracy Package of bills that put ten times more ballot drop boxes on the ground in King Co since 2015. Being the prime sponsor of the WA Civil Rights Trail bill, and Justice Reinvestment Act, and voting to close prisons, and restore felon voting rights, being the prime sponsor of the bill to recognize the first Latino in state law, fighting for the state office of equity and funding for the minority commissions, pushing for the HEAL Act are examples of the core values I bring to my time in the legislature. These are examples of how I have passed systemic change in our schools, with our elections, and in higher education. I have been advocating for the priorities of justice that start in my home, and my neighborhood, and flow throughout the district I have had the honor to represent. I am going to continue that fight for justice as I have for my entire adult life, because it is about the future of my son, and my wife and our friends and neighbors who don't come from the same racial identity I do.

Do you support the restoration of voting rights for Washingtonians who are incarcerated or have been previously incarcerated or own fees and fines? Explain your answer. *

I have spent my adult life advocating for a better stronger democracy for everyone. Yes, I support restoration of voting rights for all Washingtonians - including those currently in the custody of the state, and those previously in the custody of the state. I believe you get better government when you have better participation. I have voted or sponsored legislation to allow former felons to vote, and to reduce their LFOs, or interest rates, or methods of payment. Some states allow those that are incarcerated to vote - so it is not a crazy idea and should be done in WA. The right to vote should be inseparable from a person - it is an innate human characteristic to have a voice and agency over that voice. It is also good for the entire community as it is a way to help people heal and move back into community. 97% of people currently in state custody return to their communities - we need to make sure they are welcomed home in a way that shows they have paid their debts for crime and can move forward in positive ways. Laws that bar voting rights, or put up hurdles are remnants that should be removed of a racist past. As examples of my commitment to these issues I went to Baghdad in 2004 to help them prepare for their first elections. I was chair of the committee that ushered through the largest systemic change to our voting in more than a decade by allowing 16/17 preregistration, online registration, new voting technology, same day voter registration, automatic voter registration, more ballot boxes, more election security auditing, the WA Voting Rights Act, and the WA Native American Voting Rights Act.