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 have shifted to thinking about what needs to be done to rebuild healthy communities, shore up our broken economy, and ensure that Washington is leading the fight against priorities our federal government is failing to step in on-- healthcare for all, our climate crisis and preventing police violence-- all of which are critical in supporting the liberation of Black lives locally and across WA.

One of my top priorities is rebuilding an economy that works for everyone. I am laser-focused on lifting Washington out of our concurrent public health and economic crises, while utilizing the momentum of this moment to pass progressive taxation legislation, instead of cutting services. We must be protecting our working families, small businesses and the communities being hardest by COVID-19. This means getting people back to work safely and rebuilding an economy that works for all of us. We must be funding services by taxing the wealthiest individuals and wealthiest corporations among us, instead of on the backs of working people. To me, fixing our economy to work for everyone is one step in reducing the economic barriers--like generational wealth-- which are driven by, and perpetuate, racism in our state. We must pass a combination of progressive taxation, including a capital gains tax and we must be moving the timeline up to 2021.

I am proud to be the only candidate in this race who has consistently stood up against devastating budget cuts. This is why I have been sole-endorsed by progressive champions like Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, The Stranger and FUSE Progressive Voters Guide.

I am also ready to hit the ground running in Olympia to fight to end police misconduct and demilitarize our police force as we invest in BIPOC communities. I look forward to the guidance of and collaboration with organizations like Black Lives Matter Seattle King County to bring momentum to this issue at a state level as legislators push for the demands set forth by BLMSKC above.

I am also running to bring urgency to our climate crisis in Olympia - we need legislators who will bring momentum to passing a Green New Deal for Washington, altering our transportation systems to be electric, and ensuring a just-transition that priorities equity through this process. As an environmental advocate, I have worked to fight climate change at a federal level as Legislative Director to Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and at a local level as a citizen activist. Climate equity has always been at the forefront of my environmental policy. This is what climate justice means to me: children who live in Georgetown have a right to breathe the same quality air as children who live just a few miles away in Magnolia. This is about equity and fairness as much as it is about saving our planet. We must be fighting for solutions that address environmental racism. Locally, this means pushing for legislation that will improve density and transit options in order to improve the livability and affordability of Seattle for ALL residents rather than further gentrifying communities of color. The gentrification and displacement of the Black community in the Central District is unacceptable and cannot be repeated.

Finally, I am a fierce advocate of healthcare for all, especially as we fight this pandemic. I will stand up against cuts to public health and will push for a single-payer system in Washington. We must be addressing the disparities in healthcare and health outcomes for Black lives. We must start by removing the high costs of private insurance and private-hospitals that help reproduce and drive these disparities.
Do you believe racism is a public health crisis? Explain your answer. *

Yes, racism is absolutely a public health crisis. Systemic racism is inextricably linked to so many outcomes: economic, housing, health, employment, education, life expectancy. We know your zip code determines your health outcomes and too often racism determines the zip code you have. This, plain and simple, should not be the case. One specific example of racism as a public health crisis that impelled me to enter this race is the high rates of maternal mortality among Black women. As a mom to two young kids, one of whom suffered a stroke in utero and had to spend 10 days in the NICU, I am acutely aware of how broken our healthcare system is. The fact that racism drives differential birth outcomes for Black women in our country is horrific to me. And this is just one specific case of its effect on health outcomes, not to mention the disproportionate violence faced by Black lives by our racist police. Both of these are components of the public health crisis of racism which I want to address in the Legislature.

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

I firmly believe that budgets are moral documents. We must seriously examine the over-funding of law enforcement and instead reallocate dollars toward social and intervention programs and other measures that will provide meaningful change for our historically underrepresented communities, specifically our Black community. I am in full support of the above demands and will advocate for and work alongside you to redirect funding to culturally responsive, community-centric mental health and wellness services.

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

We must charge officers and hold them accountable-- as individuals-- when they commit crimes and violence against the people they were sworn to protect. As Executive Director of the Washington State Association for Justice, I am proud to lead an organization that has worked for decades to hold powerful police departments and state and local governments accountable for police misconduct and systemic racism. As the largest civil justice advocacy organization in the Pacific Northwest, we worked with stakeholders to pass Initiative 940 which makes it easier to prosecute police officers for negligent deadly shootings and requires de-escalation and mental health intervention training for law enforcement officers. But it is not enough.

In the legislature, I am passionate about abolishing “qualified immunity” for law enforcement officers. It is unacceptable to me that police are shielded from justice and public accountability when they violate the civil rights of the people they are sworn to protect. Given my organization’s background on these issues, I am ready to hit the ground running on this issue in 2021.
How does your racial identity shape your perspective of public policy? Explain your answer. *

I understand that I see the world from the perspective of a privileged, well-educated white woman who lives in an affluent community like the 36th Legislative District. I own that and always work to challenge myself to think through my values and critically reflect on my identity and limited lens. I believe it is my responsibility to examine all of our policies with an intersectional and anti-racist lens. This can also only happen by changing the face of power in our state and country. This is what I have spent my career fighting for.

As President of the National Women's Political Caucus of Washington, the state's oldest organization dedicated solely to recruiting and electing women to public office, I built a mission to recruit more women of color to run for office and established a training for women of color by women of color. This is because I believe that our democracy should be more representative of the people it serves. And when I took over as Executive Director of the Washington State Association for Justice, I created gender parity on our board and tripled the number of people of color on it. Again, this is because I believe that institutions should be representative of the people they serve.

We must have representatives in government who reflect the identities of people they serve and I will always be a firm ally in the fight to increase access and representation in politics.

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. *

Our criminal justice system is deeply broken. We need a massive overhaul of our incarceration systems. I am committed to reducing incarceration and improving access to justice full stop. We must recognize the system for what it is: racist. We must work to decriminalize homelessness and poverty; vacate marijuana convictions, which only harm the poor and people of color; abolish the death penalty once and for all; end cash bail and the punitive system of fees and fines; tackle gun violence in our communities by enacting commonsense gun safety laws; and urgently demilitarize our police force.

We must do all that we can to support reentry, including access to jobs, treatment, rehabilitation, education and housing. And this includes voting!

It is unconscionable to me that incarcerated and previously incarcerated individuals do not have the right to vote. We must follow the lead of states like Vermont and Maine and fight for this right in Washington. I am proud to be endorsed by criminal justice reform activist, Tarra Simmons and look forward to working on this issue with her in Olympia.