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

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

As the first Native American judge on the Washington State Supreme Court (and only one of three in the country and the only tribally enrolled justice on any state supreme court in the U.S.) , I know what it means to be discounted. Over the course of the summer, I watched, over and over, people in the media I respected, allow debates to occur on their shows about whether Black lives matter. I watched people wonder why protests were happening after the death of George Floyd. I watched national politicians say that systemic racism doesn’t exist.

I spent a lot of the summer screaming.

My sister is a Black woman; her children, my niece and nephews are black children, and they live every day wondering if they are safe in their home of Oakland, California. I share this not to ask you to believe I have Black folx in my life so that you’ll believe I am anti-racist. I share it with you because I want you to understand that the liberation and protection of Black lives, and lives of indigenous people and people of color is not just *a* priority, it is *the* priority. It is a part of all the work I have done for 30 years. It will be a part of my work my entire life, and it impacts all I do as a judge and as a justice.
Do you believe racism is a public health crisis? Explain your answer.

I don’t think that this is a question that is up for debate—racism has been shown to be a public health crisis by sociologists, medical doctors, social workers, and others. Micro and macro aggressions cause physical and mental health impacts that are measurable on BIPOC. But perhaps equally or more important is the impact on BIPOC’s ability to access healthcare. From the minimal availability of health insurance to the dismissive attitude many doctors have of the physical pain of BIPOC (particularly Black patients), we have a medical system that continues to perpetuate the public health crisis created by racism. The COVID-19 pandemic has massively impacted BIPOC communities, an issue that has been barely covered by national and local media. That is but one example of this crisis.

Do you support defunding the police? Explain your answer.

“De-funding the police” has, as I understand it, been completely misunderstood and mischaracterized over the course of the last year. Defunding the police (to me) means a reallocation of funds from law enforcement to service providers focused on prevention and intervention. I have seen hundreds of people who would never have been in the criminal justice system if they had had early intervention in mental health care, addiction, and other services that were meaningful, consistent, long-term, and evidence based. I support that reallocation of funds, so that law enforcement can engage in the actual protection of the community and retraining to address the systemic racism they continue to perpetuate.

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

The Code of Judicial Conduct prevents me from answering this question because it is an issue likely to come in front of me as a justice.
How does your racial identity shape your perspective of public policy? Explain your answer. *

As a member of the Pueblo of Isleta and a descendant of the Pueblo of Laguna (two federally recognized tribes in New Mexico), and as a woman of Jewish descent, I have spent my entire life being told I don’t belong. I’ve been told that I only got into law school because of affirmative action. I’ve had kids “war whoop” around me. I’ve been told I can’t be an Indian because they are all dead. And I’ve been told, repeatedly, that I don’t “look like a judge.” My experiences as a Native woman influence my perspective as a judge and as a personal in the world. I know what it means to be told you don’t belong. I know what it means not to be considered. I know what it means to be assumed to be unqualified. In my work in public policy, I bring all of who I am. I bring the voice that has been rarely represented in the rooms I’ve had the grace to be invited into—and I hope to continue to represent the voices of the unheard and the unrepresented in public policy.

Unfortunately, this is again something I am prevented from answering as a result of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which prevents me from speaking about issues that might come in front of me. I will note, though, that in the 15 years I served as a tribal judge, I was allowed to do pro bono work and the bulk of that work involved assisting people to restore their voting rights in many states.

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. *

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This form was created inside of BlackLivesMatter Seattle.